



Dining out in Tianjin

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Fall on the grasslands

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What's keeping China off the high seas?



Zhang Mo recently became the first Chinese man to complete a solo, non-powered circumnavigation of the globe on his sailboat.

But in China, sailing remains a sport for the rich - and for the few who are adventurous enough to realize their dreams.

He and other sailors hope to raise interest in the sport, and to develop a market not designed to keep the real sportsmen out.

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Xinhua Photo

Writing with their 'wrong' hand

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Trash incinerators dirty business, experts say



The municipal government says that the pollution standards for the incinerators will be as strict as Europe's.

CFP Photo

By Jin Zhu

The plan to replace the quickly-filling landfills with a network of incinerators has shocked many foreign and domestic experts, since incineration would send airborne numerous toxic emissions capable of damaging the nervous system.

During the five-day International Symposium on Halogenated Persistent Organic Pollutants-Dioxin which began August 23, over 10,000 experts came to Beijing from 40 countries to have their say on the garbage disposal system, and pointed that rapid deployment

of incinerators without emissions caps could double the worldwide atmospheric dioxin levels.

The national garbage volume has been increasing at 5 percent each year. In metropolises like Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen, the situation is even more severe.

"Beijing has 16 special grounds

for dumping, which could receive up to 10,300 tons. The current daily output is up to 18,400 tons, and those 16 grounds will tap out within four years," Wang Weiping, senior engineer from the Beijing Municipal Administration Committee, said.

According to the garbage disposal plan issued in June, the city will build and remodel 40 disposal devices with a total investment of 10 billion yuan over six years. By 2010, 20 percent of the city's garbage will be burned. The rate will reach 40 percent by 2015.

Xiao Jiahua, a resident of Xiaotangshan, Changping District, was one of many opponents.

"We already have a dump, and everyone nearby can't wait for it to close. Especially since it will be overflowing soon," Xiao said. "And then we heard it is being replaced with an incinerator at the same site. It made us lose hope."

"Dioxin is known worldwide to be a major pollutant. Its degradation requires hundreds of years, and it will cause great damage to public health," Zhao Zhangyuan, a researcher from the Chinese Research Academy of Environmental Sciences, said.

The government has promised to implement pollution standards that are as strict as Europe's. "For all the new incinerators in Beijing, the discharge will be no more than 0.1 nanograms of dioxin per cubic meter, which is the European Union's standard. It is not enough to harm humans," Wang Weiping said.

However, there were still protests.

"It's hard to say whether they can actually meet that standard. Even if the incinerator is designed to make the benchmark, how do we know it will continue to operate so well in the future?" Xiao said.

There is no technique to monitoring dioxin discharge in real time. "At present, the most advanced techniques record the emissions 12 hours after the fact. Real-time monitoring may be possible in five to 10 years, but it cannot be done now," Zheng Minghui, a professor specializing in dioxin at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, said.

"Since there is no timely way to monitor and control the emissions, there may be random periods of high emission," Xiao Jiahua said.

During the past few years, trash incinerators have become popular in Japan, the US and much of Europe. They occupy less than landfills, and the heat from burning trash can be used to generate electricity.

However, since experts realized the incinerators can cough out dioxins, they have slowed the construction of new incinerators.

"The number of trash incinerators in the US has been reduced from 171 to 102. No new incinerators have been built since 1995," Joe DiGangi, director of the Global Chemical Safety Program in the US Environmental Health Fund, said.

DiGangi called for more recycling and the reduction of packaging as ways to reduce the daily volume of garbage instead of blindly building trash incinerators.

"Although many companies have taken a fancy on the huge potential market in developing countries, for the countries, there is no necessity to buy expensive devices for garbage disposal since most trash are papers, plastic products and garbage coming from the kitchen which are easily recycled," he said.

Residents in Xiaotangshan have been vocal about their opposition to the government's plan, though an official response remains pending.

City steps up to burn dead pets

By Jin Zhu

The lack of burial sites for dead animals may be resolved when the city begins construction of 10 disposal plants to be completed throughout the suburbs by 2012, officials from the Municipal Bureau of Agriculture said August 27.

The plants will be built in nine suburban districts, and they will handle the disposal of dead pets and farm animals. "The dead animals will be cremated in a low-emission furnace. It will prevent environmental pollution and diseases associated with the handling and decay of dead animals," Liu Yaqing, deputy director general of the bureau, said.

"All the techniques and equipment have been demonstrated by experts, and four of the 10 plants will enter construction this year," she said.

According to statistics from the Public Security Bureau, the city had 730,000 registered pets at the end of February. Based on death rates, 36,500 of these pets will die every year.

The current most common disposal method is deep burial.

Generally speaking, dogs and cats, the two most common city pets, die of canine dis-

temper, panleukopenia or parasites, Zhou Guilan, expert on animal disease prevention at the Beijing Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Service, said.

"Although some may die of natural causes, whatever killed the rest will be able to survive for years in the bone marrow of the dead animal, and that poses a threat to the environment — especially via water table contamination," Zhou said.

The best way to deal with dead animals is cremation, but few will pay the price to send their pet to a crematorium — assuming they can locate one willing to handle pets, she said.

Community cleanup crews regularly see dead animals. Some are homeless, but most were abandoned by residents. How to deal with dead animals has become a headache for the cleaners, Li Jie, a cleaner in Shaoyaoju community, Chaoyang District, said.

"We can never know whether these animals died of disease, and we have no equipment to render them safe for burial. Where to bury them is yet another problem: no one is willing to let us bury strange, dead animals in their yard," she said.



Most residents bury their pets in remote places instead of taking them for cremation.

Photo provided by Sun Na

"Sure everyone loves their pets and would like to give them a proper funeral. But the prices of pet cemeteries are beyond the means of most people. When one of my pets dies, I pack them in a box and bury them somewhere remote," Zhang Hanqiu, a resident, said.

While it may sound good for the government to strengthen its commitment to safe burial, it has to consider the expense of incineration. Subsidies for enterprises and individuals who dispose of their dead animals properly would be a great incentive, Liu Yaqing said.



Most lefties can only get products like left-handed scissors online.

Life as a leftie

By Zhang Dongya

For most people, August 13 is hardly worthy of note. But two years ago, Chen Xiaoli and her friends at the Beijing Left-handers Society found a reason to make it special: International Left-Handers' Day.

This year, their group was joined by left-handers in Hangzhou, Kunming and Changsha. For most, it was their first time to celebrate the day, created by an American group of lefties in 1975.

But while international followers are using the day to fight for their rights in a right-handed world, Chinese celebrators use it as an excuse to meet up.

Frustrated or superior?

The Beijing Left-handers Society, founded by Chen Xiaoli in 2005, is the country's first organization for lefties.

The group has grown to include 100 members, most in their 30s or 40s. Nearly all of them dealt with parents and teachers who attempted to "correct" them to be right-handed.

"Twenty years ago, our parents looked at being left-handed as a defect. At the very least, it was a bad habit which needed to be corrected," says Jin Yan, 35, a member of the group.

Most were forced by parents and teachers to hold their pens and use chopsticks with their right hands, and were beaten when they used their left hand on impulse.

Suffering as a southpaw

Lefties often have trouble using locks and cause confusion when they shake hands.

In China, the biggest hassle is dining out with friends at a round table. Most lefties learn to use chopsticks with their right hand when eating out, and return to using their left hand in the home. When group members meet for a dinner party, it can be tough to throw off their public habits – even at a table of lefties.

Wu Linli, a photographer, took a long time to learn to use a "normal"

Ren Rongnan, 24, is one of the few in the group able to write only with his left hand. He says he was a bad student and was overlooked by his teachers, allowing him to escape "correction." He seldom uses the right side of his body.

However, recent research has shown there are many famous lefties, including Bill Gates and US President Barack Obama. Some researchers claim they are more likely to be intelligent and eloquent than their right-handed counterparts.

Few lefties in the group take such claims seriously. Wu Linli, 35, a new member who joined last month, has a more likely explanation: "We are probably cleverer because we have to try every day to adapt to a right-handed world."

camera. She is good at ping pong and badminton, but only when using her left hand. Everything in her home is geared to left-hand access: even her cups are placed with their handles on the left.

Many lefties report problems with differentiating between right and left, and must pause when thinking about directions. They learn to use right-handed scissors, knives and keyboards, but all have strange handwriting – the unnatural appearance owing to their writing with an unnatural hand.

Lack of left-handed products

According to estimates, 6 to 7 percent of the country is left-handed, which means China has at least 100 million lefties. Many feel awkward performing everyday tasks because of badly designed tools, but there are some new and promising products.

The society's founder Chen, 31, says she wanted to do business in left-handed products, but found such products were far more expensive than their more common counter-

parts for righties.

Market research in 2007 revealed a void. Even Beijing and Shanghai lack stores for the left-handed. Lefties must purchase their tools online, which means additional delivery fees.

Consequently, most choose to learn to use products which do not suit them. "I don't use scissors that often, so I just ask someone in my family to cut things," Wu says

Against the world

Chen says since founding the Beijing Left-handers Society, she has received many phone calls from young parents asking what to do about their left-handed children.

More parents are realizing it is no big deal if their children are left-handed, she says. Some research has demonstrated that forcing children to switch hands can lead to stuttering and an inability to sense direction.

Jin Yan says continuing discrimination against lefties has artificially depressed the country's left-handed population.

A few group members have insisted on making their hand preference known. One of the older members, Gudong, 34, uses her left hand for everything in life, including swiping her card at the subway

station. "As society develops, I hope and believe people will pay more attention to our rights and needs, which continue to be overlooked today," she says.

Others are content with the status of lefties in society, using the group as a social gathering to meet and make new friends.

But the group does engage in public welfare projects. In 2007, the Beijing Left-handers Society collected money, clothes and stationery to pass on to the children of inmates at Sun Village in Shunyi District.

The most important thing to most of the left-handed group members is that they can live in a society that does not discriminate against them. "We are just a group of left-handed people, and that's all," Jin Yan says.



Gudong, a member of the Beijing Left-handers Society, uses her left hand for everything life. She efforts call attention to the needs of the left-handed.

Photos by Yanni



A left-handed bicycle imported from the US in a Suzhou bicycle store costs 22,000 yuan, which is beyond the price range of most people.

CFP Photo



Sailing is a very common sport in Europe.

By Han Manman

Zhai Mo, the first Chinese sailor to attempt a solo, non-powered circumnavigation of the world, completed his tour last month after two years at sea.

The experience might be nothing to professional sailors or people from countries with a sailing history, but in China, Zhai's success could inspire many to follow their dreams on the high seas.

After weeks of rest, Zhai is planning to start a book about his experience to encourage more Chinese people to sail.

Zhai, in his 40s, started his voyage from Rizhao, Shangdong Province, on New Year's Day of 2007. His boat was 1.2 meters high and 3.85 meters across.

During the 66,000-kilometer journey, he crossed the Indian Ocean, the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and visited more than 40 countries. He endured stormy seas, hydraulic fluid leaks, fever, bruises and exhaustion. He was even mistakenly detained on the Indian Ocean for entering a US military base.

No matter how tough the situation he suffered, the memories are valuable and interesting.

"The weather changes very quickly on the sea, and the days felt like years, especially in bad weather. Violent winds, waves and rainstorms rocked the boat, which seemed ready to overturn at any time," Zhai says. Several times he had to bind himself to the boat with a rope to avoid falling into the sea.

"The purpose of such a voyage goes beyond navigation itself; I regard it as a cultural journey, through which, I learn about many customs and cultures," Zhai says.

Zhai's next goal is to compete in the Vendee Globe, the only solo non-stop around-the-world race held by France. The five-month contest will be long and tough, and contestants will communicate only by satellite telephone during the journey.

Fulfilling the dream

Zhai Mo is an artist-but after this journey, the country will know him as a sailor and adventurer.

He grew up as a painter and held an exhibition in France in 2001. Dreaming of adventure, Zhai began planning his global journey in 2003.

It was tough to raise money for the trip, he says. Because of his limited budget, Zhai had to persuade businessmen to support his project and it took him four years to get the financial backing he needed.

"I intended to break a record when I planned to make a global voyage on sea at the very beginning, and I really want to see more Chinese people practicing navigation using my logbook," Zhai says.

Zhai says non-powered sailing is viewed as an economical and environmental sport in Europe, as it has a lower average cost. However, in China, the sport is viewed as a luxury lifestyle.

When rich men decide to play with sailboats to show their wealth, the facilities and equipment become incredibly expensive. It's backwards. The people who love sailing cannot afford it, so the sport can never develop.

He says fulfilling the dream was not the hard part: the hard part was talking the first step.

As the youngest son of six in an artist family, Zhai remains single-something rare in his hometown. His world voyage prompted his girlfriend to break up with him.

"My mother always complained that I should settle down

and have a family. But I think sailing the world is my dream," he says.

Privilege for the rich

Few dare to share Zhai's dream: in China, sailing is a novelty limited to the country's most wealthy.

There are less than 100 amateur sailors in China. The sport remains stuck in infancy, professional sailor Zhang Tinghui says.

Zhang says that unlike in the West, sailing in China is a luxury

it has a lower average cost.

"When China's rich men decide to play with sailboats to show their wealth, the facilities and equipment become incredibly expensive," Zhai says. "It's backwards. The people who love sailing cannot afford it, so the sport can never develop."

Private yacht and sailboat docks have been established in China's coastal provinces and cities such as Qingdao, Hainan and Shenzhen have private yacht and sailboat docks, but Zhai looks at the annual 400,000 to 500,000 yuan club fees askance.

"The clubs only service the rich. But sailing is not supposed to be for the rich," Zhai says.

The rich spend tens of millions of yuan to buy luxury yachts and spend another million yuan to join a club and get a dock. But common people can only afford to spend 10,000 yuan for a sailboat and even less to rent a dock.

"Owning a sailboat can actually save money on things such as accommodation fees during your voyage," Zhai says.

Zhang shares his opinion. Ten years on the high seas have enabled him to see the world, and to see how sluggishly China's sailing industry has developed.

In the West, even ordinary workers and children can be amateur sailors, he says.

"I have met three British men. They really like long voyages. On the sea, they lie on the deck and enjoy the sunlight. When they dock, they rent a motorcycle to tour," Zhang says.

The US has 17 million registered sailboats, Europe has 19 million and New Zealand has 1 million sailboats: this means one in four New Zealanders has a sailboat.

China has more than a billion people and an exceptionally long coast, yet its sailboat total remains

a dismal.

Promoting sailing

Zhang and Zhai say nothing is done to promote sailing in China, and few people in the general public know anything about the sport.

Zhang said when he was in Spain, he saw many children sail, and the parents never had to worry about their safety. "Many Chinese parents are terrified to see their children play even along the beach, let alone on a boat," Zhang says.

Li Qunhai, deputy director of the Water Sports Administration Center under the State General Administration of Sport of China, says the local training base is disjointed.

From spotting talent to running clubs to building and selling boats, there is nothing holding the industry together. Li says the chaotic market may be retarding the sport's development.

However, that is not to say effort is not being made. The China Cup committee, which held the first-ever and only big boat sailing regatta initiated by the government, hosted a series of sailing summer camps for children and fund-raising auctions to help build sailing schools for young people.

At the same time, the committee is planning a Sailing Training Center in cooperation with the Chinese Yachting Association. This training program aims to provide sailing enthusiasts with professional training service.

"Raising public interest in the sport is the first step," Zhai says. "Only if you actually try it can you understand how great the sport and the way of life is."

Zhai says he is happy to see the government attempting to promote the sport, and he hopes to open his own public sailing school. But that voyage is still being planned.



Zhai Mo hopes his global voyage will encourage more Chinese people to sail.

Photos provided by Zhai Mo



Posed for photos while his boat was repaired in Africa.



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Closure of Cherkizovsky

Businessmen abroad go into markets unprotected

By Huang Daohen

When the Russian government closed the Cherkizovsky market in late June, citing sanitary concerns, it raised questions about whether the move was a response to an actual breach of the law or a cheap shot to crush legal Chinese competition.

As more and more businessmen go abroad with "Made-in-China" products, the need to protect their interests and rights has become urgent.



The Cherkizovsky Market was Europe's biggest wholesale market offering cheap consumer goods.

Abrupt Moscow shutdown

Chen Guangjie, a businessman from Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, worries about his business in Moscow.

The shoe trader, 47, did business in Moscow's Cherkizovsky market for over a decade before he was thrown out and forced back to Wenzhou last week.

It was the biggest loss he had ever experienced.

On June 29, the Russian government ordered Cherkizovsky Market, Europe's biggest wholesale market, to close after inspectors found a series of hygienic and storage violations. The sudden shutdown left tens of thousands of Chinese businessmen like Chen jobless.

"We heard people whispering about the shutdown the last few years, but the government never moved on it, so I left a lot of goods at the market, approximately US \$2 million (13.7 million yuan) worth," Chen says.

However, Chen says his return to Wenzhou is temporary. He still left a few employees in Moscow to sell at other nearby markets, but he has stopped exporting his shoes to Russia.

Chen, like other Chinese businessmen in Moscow, arrived there in the 1990s when the country was desperate for consumer goods. In the good years before the closure, Chen says he could make a profit of 100,000 yuan a month from his market stall.

But to save money, Chen says he and his family now buy potatoes and cabbage to cook for themselves.

In addition to the impact on Chinese business in Moscow, the closure hit factories in China that supplied goods to Cherkizovsky.

"The impact is huge. Behind each businessman in the market, there was at least one supply factory in China," Chen says.

Reasons for closure

But why the Russia government chose to shut down the wholesale market is suspicious. Was it really due to poor sanitation and fire prevention?

Wen Yi, an associate researcher with the Institute of China's Economic Reform and Development at Renmin University of China, says many factors prompted the closure, the most notorious of which is the "gray customs clearance."

The term emerged in the 1990s, when businessmen first went to Russia. The booming bilateral trade led some government-connected clearance companies to start a "gray

clearance" business, Wen says.

They looked after the processing of customs and duty, but charged a much lower tax rate than the official level.

The system helped Chinese traders save on customs clearance fees, Wen says, but they were liable to huge losses if they were spot-checked by Russian authorities.

In recent years, the Russian government has attempted to tightly regulate its domestic market. Goods imported through gray channels became labeled contraband, and their owners faced penalties.

Local reports in Moscow say 150 Chinese businessmen were detained, and most of their wares were confiscated by Russian authorities.

Wen says it was right for Moscow to step in, but noted the government would have to tread lightly. Crushing the grey imports could send ripples of disease into the country's investment environment.

Investments in Russia's domestic light industry have increased, bolstering the state's confidence to crack down on smugglers, Wen says.

Future for Moscow Chinese

For the disappointed businessmen, there is some good news. China's Ministry of Commerce said Monday that most Chinese merchandise can be recovered.

The consensus was reached by a Chinese senior delegation, led by Vice Minister of Commerce Gao Hucheng, who arrived in Russia last month to discuss the closure issue.

The memorandum included plans to build a Chinese shopping mall on the site of the closed Cherkizovsky market, the ministry says.

The Chinese side will cover all construction costs, the Itar-Tass news agency reported, citing Vladimir Malyshkov, head of the metropolitan department of consumer market and services. The plan will include a large shopping mall and logistics center.

The total investment is estimated at 6.8 billion yuan, and the construction will take two years, Malyshkov says.

Chen says he has recovered most of his seized goods, though he is unsure what he will do next.

"I am thinking about registering a company in Moscow, as I worry there will be another crackdown," he says. "I'm also looking forward to seeing the Chinese shopping mall so that we can do business in our own market."

Opinion

Protecting Chinese businessmen overseas

Tens of millions of Chinese businessmen have gone to 170 countries and regions to sell Made-in-China products. They are courageous, hard working and respectable.

But the interests and welfare of this group require further protection as they interact with local businessmen and local authorities on an unprecedented scale.

In Russia, the "gray customs clearance" system was an open secret for years and served as an invitation to Chinese traders willing to engage in smuggling.

Years ago Russia set up a legal and official customs clearance system, but few Chinese used it, as it cost more time, energy and money.

Why is there no Chinese organization willing to coordinate with Russian authorities to make the official procedures more efficient?

Chambers of commerce and other industry organizations should have been more active. As most Chinese merchants abroad are doing business on their own in the retail and catering industries, and most are waiting for an outside agency to regulate their trade.

Many Chinese experts have said the key to survival and prosperity abroad is to avoid competing solely based on low prices, and instead improving brands through innovation.

This cannot be achieved overnight. In order to integrate better into local economies and communities, Chinese merchants need long-term support, regulations and incentives from official departments or non-governmental organizations on the Chinese side.

— Liang Cun, commentator, Xinhua news agency



Local authorities in Moscow shut down the Cherkizovsky Market on June 29.

CFP Photos



Many Chinese workers in Moscow have been stranded since the closure.

Photo provided by Oriental Outlook

Background

About Cherkizovsky market

Established in the early 1990s, Cherkizovsky Market was the biggest wholesale market in Eastern Europe, and a large number of its businessmen were from China, Vietnam and central Asian countries.

It was closed temporarily on June 29 by the Moscow authority out of concerns over smuggling and safety. The market was home to the businesses of 60,000 to 80,000 Chinese businessmen at that time.

Should law prevent young love?

By Wang Dong

"Young love," referring to feelings of love between people under the age of 18, is usually a headache for Chinese parents and teachers.

But a local government in Heilongjiang Province created a law regulating this brand of love.

The recently held 12th session of the Standing Committee of Heilongjiang Provincial People's Congress passed the "Regulations of Heilongjiang Province on the Protection of Minors."

The law listed "preventing young love" under provisions for family protection, saying parents or guardians should educate minors about it, and prevent or stop youthful love, the *People's Daily* reported.

The news provoked heated discussions. Some psychologists and lawyers believe "prevent" could be legally interpreted as "forbid," which means parents or guardians should not allow their children to fall in "young love."

The government replied several days later. A delegate to the Heilongjiang Provincial People's Congress said the law is aimed at parents and guardians rather than the phenomenon of youthful love. The law was created to remind parents and guardians of their responsibility, the *Legal Daily* said.

When the regulations were first written, the item about young love was not included, the Heilongjiang congressional member said. But during the Standing Committee's review, a member proposed that parents prevent minors from falling in love, and educate, criticize and help those who have already done so.

The law is the first of its kind in China to include "young love." National and provincial law and regulations do not contain any item about it.



A Heilongjiang local government's move to prevent young love has generated controversy. CFP Photo

Background

Young love in China

There is no legal definition of young love, as the defining age and intensity of young love are controversial subjects.

"We did not know what young love was back in our time," said Guo Shaolan, a 50-year-old woman, who attended high school in the 1970s.

Few of her peers fell in love then. If parents found out their children had their eye on someone, the adults beat them severely, Guo said.

"I did not dare even imagine falling in love, even after I had begun working," she said, "All I

thought then was how to work hard and make a better life."

The situation changed in the 1980s, as the country's economy developed and people's attitude toward romance changed.

"I knew several couples in my high school," said Zhao Jinxia, who became a teenager in the 1990s.

But young couples in the 80s and 90s did not dare be seen together in public. If a teacher saw his students holding hands in school, he would reprimand them, Zhao said.

"We have more freedom

now," she said.

Fadhili, a Tanzanian who is a father to twin sons aged 4, can understand China's issues with youthful love. "We have the same problem in my country," he said.

When a country, like China, opens up to the world after decades of seclusion, there is bound to be a clash of the new and old traditions. "Our government tried to introduce similar laws to dissuade young relationships but the problems were too difficult to confine," Fadhili said.

Comment

Guarantees children's healthy development

My child will be 15 years old this year, and I'm quite worried that young love will affect his school performance. If a child falls into this problem, it's the fault of the parents' lack of discipline. Creating a law to prevent young love will guarantee healthy development, and is a demonstration of love to minors.

— Mrs Zhang, parent

Young love is beautiful

We should not make a law to prevent love. What we should do is to regulate minors' sexual acts. Young love can be beautiful and helpful. I remember I worked even harder in high school as I wanted to attract a girl.

Our principal married a woman who was his sweetheart since his young days. They are now a very happy couple.

— Wang Huimin, former high school teacher

Not the gov's business

Parents in my country usually do not interfere in their children's personal lives. They just give advice. Besides, it's the business of parents and their children. The government should leave them alone. A lot of young people fall in love in high school. I do not think this is a problem in European countries.

— Peter Johansson,

Swedish student in Beijing

Improve sex education

We should not suppress feelings but educate children. Parents may worry about their children's behavior if they fall in love. But it is more fruitful if we improve sex education and give them a better environment in which to grow up.

— Liu Wenliang, PhD holder at the Chinese Academy of Sciences

Young love helps

If it does not involve sex acts, love among minors is acceptable in the US. I know children in China are under more pressure to do well in exams, but I think children should be exposed to different experiences while growing up, like how to get along with other people, including the opposite sex. So young love can help them develop a more holistic personality. They may make some mistakes, but it is worth it. You have to crawl before you learn how to walk.

— David Murphy, US businessman in Beijing

Not humane

Love between young people is very common. I think it's better if teachers and parents guide minors and give advice rather than put pressure. A law that prevents love is a bit inhumane. It's quite appalling.

— Lan Tian, college student

Debate of the week



Smoking in the wrong place could land you in jail. AP Photo

Smokers face jail

Smokers who light up in petrol stations, shopping malls, restaurants and Internet cafes are facing a five-day summary jail sentence.

The regulations, issued by the Public Security Ministry as part of a 50-day plan to create a good environment for National Day, claimed their first victim last weekend when a 56-year-old man was jailed in Chongqing.

The man, identified only by his surname Zhao, was detained last Saturday for smoking a cigarette in one of the city's many shopping malls, according to a report in the *Chongqing Evening News*.

While Zhao's son argued a fine might have been more appropriate, Wang Dezhi, the deputy director of the local fire department, said the arrest was intended as a deterrent to others who ignore the new regulations which have been in force since August 20.

The antismoking regulation was one of "six rules" issued to fire safety officers ahead of the October 1 celebrations, including clearing fire exits and closing down premises with out-of-date permits. China has a record of lethal fires in poorly maintained shopping malls and restaurants.

The country is gearing up for a grand celebration to mark its sexagenial.

The celebrations will be focused around a military and cultural parade through Beijing's Tiananmen Square involving some 200,000 students celebrating the theme of "Motherland and I Marching Together".

Security has been tightened markedly ahead of the anniversary, with several social networking websites closed down and key dissidents being placed under house arrest.

But in a country devoted to smoking — China has 350 million smokers, or a third of the population over age 15 — the arrest of Zhao has become something of a talking point.

According to a straw poll in Yangzhou, Jiangsu Province, some supported the regulations, arguing they were in the interests of public safety, while others thought it too harsh to designate bars and Internet cafes as "flammable areas."

A third group believed that, as so often in China, the smoking regulation was impractical and would largely be ignored.

To quote an old saying, one Yangzhou taxi driver told his local newspaper, it was a case of "big thunder, little rain."

(Agencies)

US teenager reunites with birth parents

By Venus Lee

Seventeen-year old Ji Jiacheng attended a family reunion last Saturday. That day, he saw his biological parents whom he had not seen in more than a decade.

Ji, who has been renamed Christian Norris, was accompanied to the gathering by his adoptive American mother, Julia Norris, 42. It took Julia four years to make her son's wish come true.

When the teenager emerged at the Gloria Plaza Hotel lobby, his birth parents, grandmother and uncle began crying on each other's shoulder. Then they rushed forward to hug him. Julia joined the embrace, tears spilling from her eyes.

Christian's rediscovery of his Chinese roots does not end in Beijing. In the next few days, he and Julia will visit the Ningxia village where he was born and lived the first six years of his life. Christian's birth father hopes the trip will bring back memories of his childhood, and make him appreciate even more the love given by his American mother.

Julia, who works for American World Adoption Association, adopted Christian in 2001 during a visit to an orphanage in Luoyang, Henan Province. The boy ended up

at the orphanage after his father lost him at a long-distance bus station when he was 6.

The American woman said Christian had a very difficult time his first three months in the home in mainland because he seemed like "a fish out of water" in his new surroundings. "He couldn't speak English at all at that time. We communicated through body language. Also, he didn't trust other people – especially adults – because he believed he was abandoned by his parents," Julia said.

As time went by, Christian opened up bit by bit and shared with his new mother memories of his life in China. Julia took note of each piece of information, including his parents' name, work and home environment. But some of the information he could only remember in fragments.

In 2005, Christian asked Julia to find his Chinese parents, and thus began their four-year search.

In April, Julia received an offer of help from Baby Come Home, a Chinese NGO that helps parents find their lost children through a vast network of volunteers. A month later, the group located Christian's parents in Ningxia. Julia immediately arranged a meeting.

"Julia is a great mother. It's



Julia Norris (left-center) received gifts from her son's birth parents.

Photo by Wang Xiaoxi

really hard for a single woman to raise a boy. She's so kind-hearted and responsible. We're so grateful Julia has been taking care of our son so well. Our appreciation to her is beyond words. I wish I could repay it one day," Shao Julian, Christian's birth mother said.

Julia was initially worried Christian would choose to stay behind in China if his father insisted. But after the reunion, both sides agreed it would be best for the young man to return to the US where he is finishing high school, has a solid

group of friends and which he considers home.

"He has lived for nine years with Julia, and they are attached to each other. We don't want to cause him more hurt and separation. We will be content as long as we know he's happy and safe," Ji Gaoke, Christian's father, said.

Julia is not threatened that Christian is renewing his relationship with his birth parents. "I'm very confident in our relationship. It's very solid," she told *Beijing Today*.

She also encourages her son to be in touch with his Chinese heritage. "He definitely has the right to know about his past and to seek his roots. Whether he will live in China or not, I will respect his will," she said.

Julia describes Christian as "kind, decent and smart though a little bit shy." She said he does well in school and sports. "He is brilliant in hockey and soccer. And he skipped a grade in middle school."

Julia said Christian plans to go to a military college; his ambition was originally to become a Navy SEAL – the special operations forces of the US Navy. But the young man changed his mind after the family reunion. "I will study international economics because I might come and go between the two countries and frequently visit my Chinese parents," Christian said.

Through the visit, Christian became confident he was not abandoned by his biological parents. "He has already forgiven them because he knows everybody makes mistakes," Julia said. "Christian and I will create a blog when we return to the US. We will frequently update Christian's photos and journal to share his life with his Chinese parents."

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EU Chamber asks China for more economic openness and reforms

By Zhao Hongyi

The European Union Chamber of Commerce in China urged the country along further economic openness and fundamental reforms to maintain its attractiveness to foreign investors and to achieve sustainable economic recovery.

The chamber voiced its appeals in its annual paper, "European Business in China Position Paper 2009-2010," released Wednesday in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou.

The chamber believes the current economic crisis provides a

prime opportunity for China to restructure its economy and build a transparent and fair business environment for both domestic and foreign companies.

The paper's strongest emphasis is on market access. It says the 50/50 joint-venture requirement for foreign companies continues to hinder market development. It also says equal treatment for domestic and foreign companies is conspicuously absent in the public procurement process; technical regulations and certification procedures are being used to limit market access in some sectors;

a lack of reform and openness remains in the service sector; and a limited market access for foreign companies plagues energy-related sectors.

Transparency in legislation and implementation are the second biggest concerns. The paper says the time granted for public comments on draft legislation is a long way from best international practices; consultations on draft legislation are often limited to selected persons or groups; and the enforcement of regulations on Chinese firms is often weaker than on foreign firms.

"Over the past year, we have noted a gradual slowdown – and in some cases a partial reversal – in the economic opening up process," Joerg Wuttke, the chamber's president, said at the paper's release in Beijing. "However, we are convinced that this is an ideal moment for China to adopt a new and bolder cycle of reforms, a move that would ensure that China maximizes its growth potential over the next five to 10 years."

Wuttke sees the Chinese economy facing another downturn in the next few years. "The

economic recovery formula would be a 'w,' rather than a 'v.'" He also predicts that China's economy will grow an annual 6 to 8 percent in the coming decade. "After that, its long-term growth will be on a flat line, if not down."

The study surveyed the chamber's 1,400 member-companies in China. The chamber will present the paper to the Chinese government and regulatory agencies, the European Commission and EU member states, and numerous business organizations and companies worldwide.



More than 50 percent of the world's shark fin supply go to the Chinese market.

Photo provided by WildAid

WildAid appeals to China to halt shark fin consumption

By Han Manman

There is urgent need in China to protect the world's dwindling shark population, says US-based WildAid environmental organization, which has launched a campaign in the country to convince consumers to stop eating shark fin.

In recent years, shark numbers have fallen drastically, threatening the existence of some species. While exact scientific data is lacking, figures show imports of shark fin have rocketed in China, says WildAid President Steve Trent.

The UN's Food and Agriculture Organization estimates 100 million sharks are caught each year, though experts say the real number could be twice that.

Most sharks are caught just for their fins. "They are taken on board, their fins are hacked off and they are dumped back into the water dead or dying," Trent said.

Shark fin, once offered as

a gift to Chinese emperors, is traditionally served at wedding banquets and occasions when the host wants to impress guests with expensive and unusual dishes.

"China is key. All the best estimates suggest that more than 50 percent of shark fin is for the mainland Chinese market," Trent said, adding that as the population enjoys increasing wealth, money is spent on luxury goods like shark's fins. "That means there is a pressure now that is no longer sustainable on these species in the wild," he said.

Trent said the Chinese public knows little of the problem, thinking sharks are fierce killers, and that eating their fins is good for the health.

Traditional Chinese medicine says shark fins reinforce energy, improve circulation, clear phlegm, act as a diuretic, improve the appetite and nourish the skin. Trent how-

ever said that eating the fin is not as healthy as people think as its high mercury content could lead to problems like female infertility among people who eat too much.

To raise public awareness of shark conservation, WildAid has invited celebrities such as action film star Jackie Chan and basketball idol Yao Ming to join the campaign to promote wildlife protection.

"The problem has global implications, but the reason we put much more effort in China is because China alone can do a great deal to save the sharks," Trent said, adding that he has great faith the country can provide a solution to the problem.

WildAid, an international non-profit environmental organization based in San Francisco, seeks to save endangered wildlife. It has offices in China, Canada and the UK.

Focus on Spanish culture at international book fair

By Han Manman

As the honorary country of this year's Beijing International Book Fair, Spain is promoting its literature and culture at the five-day event that began yesterday.

Spanish Culture Minister Angeles Gonzalez Sinde said the ministry has been working with their embassy and the Instituto Cervantes in Beijing to present dances, exhibitions, dramas and lectures at the fair.

"Under the current financial crisis, cooperation in the cultural industry has become a new highlight of the relationship between China and Spain," Sinde said, adding that the lineup of activities aims to present Spain's different facets to the Chinese public.

Spanish authorities have observed that an increasing number of Spanish readers are becoming interested in Chinese literature and culture, Sinde said, thus the fair has become an ideal venue for cultural exchange.

This year, Spanish representatives to the fair include 24 publishing houses, most of which are among the country's biggest. They are showcasing Spanish classics and contemporary works that introduce the Spanish culture and lifestyle to China.

Sinde, who was president of the Spanish Academy of Arts and Cinematographic Sciences for three years until April, hopes Spain and China can ink an agreement next year to promote each other's arts and films.

"Movies are the 'business cards' of a country," she said. "The Spanish people can learn about China and its culture through Chinese movies and vice versa," said the minister, who is also a multi-awarded scriptwriter and film director.

Next year, the Spanish government will step up its promotion of Spanish classic and contemporary culture in China to coincide with the Shanghai World Expo and China-Spain Language Year, Sinde said.

She said the Spanish government is planning to keep its pavilion in Shanghai after the expo to serve as a Chinese-Spanish cultural exchange center.

This year's Beijing International Book Fair presents 1,360 exhibits from 56 countries and regions. Eight hundred foreign and multinational publishing groups are represented, including Elsevier, Springer, Harper Collins and Penguin. Many US and UK publishers are attending for the first time.



Spanish Culture Minister Angeles Gonzalez Sinde visits an exhibition in Beijing.

Photo provided by Instituto Cervantes

Fans race Citroën 2CVs from Inner Mongolia to Tianjin

By Wang Dong

A fleet of 31 Citroën 2CVs zoomed into Tianjin last week at the end of a race that began in Inner Mongolia.

The Raid Mongolia China, organized to commemorate Citroën's 90th anniversary, counted the car's fans among the amateur racers.

The event began in Ulan Bator, Inner Mongolia, on August 11 and passed Zhangjiakou and Chengde in Hebei Province, and the Simatai Great Wall in Beijing.

"It was a great journey," said Gerard de Barbeyrac, 58, a competitor from Bordeaux, southwestern France. He finished second in the race, in what is his and his family's first trip to China in their 2CV.

France holds a number of 2CV races annually, called 2CV Cross, in which de Barbeyrac has participated for the past 15 years.

The Frenchman fell in love with the 2CV when he was 22,

the year he bought a 1956 model and traveled in it to Persepolis, Iran, with friends. Since then, he has taken the car on several trips to Africa.

The car, dubbed the "tin snail" because of its earlier designs, has also gained fans among the younger generation. "We're very glad to have this opportunity to drive our 2CV in such a long race," said Julie, 19, de Barbeyrac's daughter, who teamed up with her brother in the China race.

The 2CV the siblings drove was custom-built. Because Citroën stopped producing the car between 1990 and 2007, most aficionados buy old models and take them apart to assemble a new one.

Most cars that joined Raid Mongolia China broke down after crossing the finish line due to the rough roads and rainstorms. "I had to push my car when I finished the race," de Barbeyrac said,



The Bordeaux family who joined the race

Photo provided by Gerard de Barbeyrac

laughing, "but I'll repair it and compete again in the next race."

International 2CV races are held biennially, and the next one will be seen in Brazil.

The 2CV, which came out in 1948,

is considered one of Citroën's most iconic cars. It was designed for low cost, easy use, and off-road driving. During a production run of 42 years, more than 5 million of the cars were sold.

Free ClubFootball lesson for kids

With soccer fever now in full swing, ClubFootball is giving kids in Beijing a free one-hour coaching session until the end of September.

The course is open to boys and girls of all backgrounds and their families, and coached by professional and qualified FA coaches.

ClubFootball has three coaching grounds at Zhongguancun, Wangjing and Chaoyang Park. Each child is treated to an hourlong session in the skills and techniques used in soccer today. Participants learn the basic skills of the game, but are also treated to the many benefits the team sport can bring to children.

For detailed information, please check on the junior channel of wanguoqunxing.com.

(By Annie Wei)

Photo provided by Club Football



Beijing witnesses first iPod Battle

By Annie Wei

Beijingers witnessed for the first time this week the French-conceived iPod Battle.

The competition, held at the Mac store in Sanlitun, was done in the same spirit as a break-dance or DJ popularity contest. Participants were put in teams and pitted against each other. The goal was to make the crowd go wild with the team's music selection on their Apple music players.

The event lasted only 30 minutes but was unforgettable to both the audience and participants.

New Zealanders Sam Pearson, 31, and his girlfriend Sophia McKinnon, 24, were the most well-prepared contestants. The couple wore costumes to the

event, danced to their music and won the most applause.

"We both love music and wanted to have fun. Also we wanted to share our music with people of Sanlitun," said Pearson, who works in sports marketing.

For their pink and black fashion ensemble, Pearson and McKinnon were named the best-dressed team. Pearson said pink represents "fun, love and passion," while black means "cool and strong."

Other participants included G. Bradley Kastan and Kyle Constantin Canton, co-founders of The SSC LTD Web site design company; Zhu Tangchun, sales manager of Headplay Electronic Technology; and Jesper Lodah of

Club Beautiful Beijing.

The only downside to the evening was the sound system's poor performance, which made audience members shake their heads.

Organized by local event coordinator Rivera Events, the iPod Battle was a good marketing strategy for the Apple product. The first iPod Battle took place in France and it has since been held in various cities worldwide.

Two more iPod Battles will happen this month at The Village.

iPod Battle

When: September 8, 15 and 22, 7-7:30 pm

Where: 19 Sanlitun Road, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6417 1568



Sam Pearson and Sophia McKinnon at iPod Battle

Photo by Benoit Thebaut

Event

TouchAfrica Tourism and Culture Festival

With representatives from 49 African countries, the TouchAfrica Tourism and Culture Festival brings African handicrafts, artifacts, music, food and performances to Beijing. The nine-day festival includes photography and painting exhibits, coffee and chocolate tasting, business forums, activities for children and the first Africa Film Festival in Beijing.

Where: 6 Chaoyang Park Road, Chaoyang District

When: September 4-13

Tel: 5905 6565

Spanish writers' roundtable discussion

As part of the activities for the Beijing International Book Fair, which this year has Spain as its guest of honor, Instituto Cervantes will bring together for a roundtable discussion some of today's most respected Spanish writers. Jesus Ferrero, Juan Madrid, Na Duo and Luis Garcia Jambrina will discuss contemporary thrillers.

Where: Instituto Cervantes, A1 Gongti Nan Lu, Chaoyang District

When: September 4, 7 pm

Tel: 5879 9666

Rugby club looks for new members

The Vermilion Beijing Devils is one of Beijing's most successful rugby clubs, which competes regularly in local and international tournaments. Head to The Den on Saturday to join the club, then hang out with members to watch the Tri Nations game between Australia and South Africa. The event includes free flow beer and pizza for members.

Where: The Den, A4 Gongti Dong Lu, Chaoyang District

When: September 5, 4 pm

Tel: 6592 6290

Registration for Beijing International Marathon

Online registration is open for this year's Beijing International Marathon, to be held on October 18. The race, which expects 30,000 participants from around the world, will start in Tian'anmen Square, head west and then north.

The 4-kilometer fun run, open to runners of all ages, ends at Fuchengmen. The 9-kilometer, ideal for beginning runners, ends at Chegongzhuang. The half-marathon finishes at Haidian Park, while the full marathon goes all the way to the National Olympic Sports Center.

Registration fees for foreigners are \$60 (410 yuan) for the marathon and \$ 55 for the rest.

Where: Octagon, 701 China Life Tower, 16 Chaoyang Avenue, Chaoyang District

When: 9 am - 6 pm

Tel: 8525 1200 ext. 826

Web site: beijing-marathon.com

(By Wei Ying)

New business for Beijing's ignored British cabs

By Wang Yu

A rental service for British cabs in Beijing has been authorized by owners Shouqi Group and Beijing Beiqi Taxi Group. Customers can book a cab through a hotline.

The vehicles, popularly known as "London cabs" or "black cabs" because of their original color, were introduced to the Chinese public during the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Almost a century after they debuted in the UK, the vehicles have become an indelible part of British contemporary life and have become the world's most popular taxi design.

Beijingers however associate them with transportation exclusively for the disabled because of the role they played during the Games, and thus stay away from them.

After the Olympics, fewer and fewer of the cabs roamed the streets because they did not get much business. Drivers chose to stay home and wait for calls rather than burn fuel on the gas-guzzler.

But the cars turn heads whenever they are on the road. Aside from looks, British cabs also represent privacy and comfort: the driver is separated from passengers by a glass panel, and they communicate using an intercom. If passengers do not want the driver to hear their conversation, they can turn off the intercom.



A British cab

CFP Photo

Unlike most cabs, British ones have no front passenger seat; the space can be used to store luggage. The vehicle's carriage is so spacious that it can seat five adults, and allow a person under 2 meters to stand. "It's very comfortable inside you might forget you're sitting in traffic," says Chen Zhen, manager of the cab service, who fell in love with the British cab on his first ride.

Chen enjoyed the experience so much he approached Shouqi Group and Beijing Beiqi Taxi Group about

a business deal. "My team does the promotion and helps the operators find clients. This eases their existing problems," he said.

The collaboration offers two main services: round trips between the city and the airport, and per-day rentals.

There are 30 British cabs in the city, 10 of which are on long-term lease by some embassies. The rest are available to the public. The rental service accepts a maximum of 100 bookings per day and

demand has been high, so interested parties are advised to make a reservation two days ahead.

The British cabs are made locally by Chinese automaker Geely with the authority of their British manufacturer Manganese Bronze.

How to rent

Hotline: 13811446644

Price: 200 yuan for a round trip between the city and the airport; 500 yuan for a half-day rental and 800 yuan for a full day. Prices include the cost of fuel.

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyi@ynet.com

I heard that part of China's economic stimulus plan is to refund consumers 13 percent of what they spend on electronic products. As a foreigner, do I qualify?

This 13-percent refund only applies to consumers who are part of a rural household. Urban residents, such as those in Beijing, enjoy a different perk: they can exchange used home appliances for new ones. However, only Chinese nationals can take advantage of the scheme.

I'm throwing a big housewarming party and need tons of paper cups. There are so many brands in local grocery stores and I don't know which to get. There are some really cheap ones, but their quality looks dubious.

When choosing paper cups, look for ones marked "QS," which means "quality security." Beginning this month, authorities are requiring all food packaging and container manufacturers to include the stamp. Paper cups from grocery stores and supermarkets usually cost 15 yuan for a pack of 50, and 20 yuan for a hundred. Cheap ones, sold at roadside stalls or small markets for 15 yuan for a pack of 100, might not be safe.

(By Wei Ying)

Guam launches first direct charter flight from Beijing



Guam lies in the northern Pacific.

CFP Photo

By Han Manman

To attract more Chinese tourists on National Day, Guam's tourism office recently launched a direct charter flight for the holiday.

Air China and Guam-based Century Tours will operate the first direct charter flight from Beijing to Guam on October 2 on the Airbus A330, according to the Guam Visitor Bureau. The plane has a capacity of 225 passengers.

Beijing travel agents are

now selling six-day Guam tour packages, starting at 7,080 yuan per person.

"Tourism is the biggest driver for the local economy. In the coming five years, we believe China will become one of the countries with the highest number of arrivals in Guam," Gerald S. A. Perez, the bureau's general manager, said.

"This first direct chartered flight signifies our commitment

to enter the Chinese market, and represents the increasing demand from Chinese residents to visit our island," Perez said, adding that his office is planning to establish more direct flights to give mainland travelers easier access to the island.

Guam, five and a half hours away from Beijing, is a US territory that belongs to the Mariana Islands, a group of islands on the northern Pacific Ocean.

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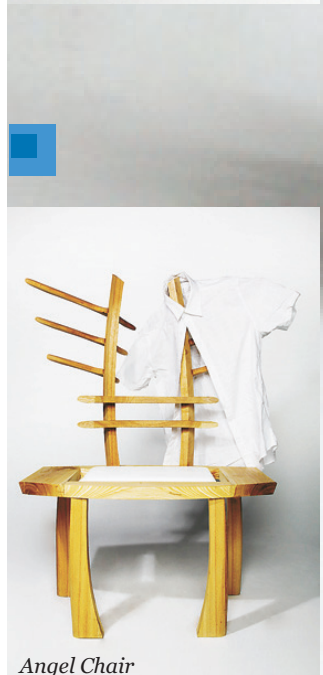


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Local designers se



Ladder Chair



Angel Chair

Original Design Circle (ODC) Exhibition

Where: The Village at Sanlitun, 19, Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Until January 2010, 11 am – 10 pm
Tel: 6415 2472

Original designs

Most of the works at the exhibition are related to daily necessities – coffee cups, nail clippers, toothpicks and chairs, but based on unique and clever ideas.

A series of products from Antevanilla, a new design company in Hong Kong, attracted much attention for its unique collection of lifestyle home objects. Its Button Wall Hook on display is shaped like a button and securely holds overcoats and other clothes, and the Venus Egg Holder is modeled on the broken-armed Venus.

The collections include many local original designs. LKK Design, a Beijing-based studio founded in 2004, showed two products at the exhibition: a pair of colorful nail clippers and a toothpick case. The former won the 2007 Red Dot Design Award, one of the world's top design competitions.

"When design is applied to living, it becomes charged with emotion," Jia Wei, 33, the general manager, said.

In the past, China's designers were more technicians than artists. But they are learning to give cold, household objects new beauty, and are focusing on the color, shape and material to create beauty and art.

Traditional elements and environmentally-friendly concepts are key to new works, and the toothpick case introduced both.

The toothpick is called Shangshangqian, after the term for the best fortune one can draw at a temple. The case is designed in the shape of a classic sculpted temple roof, and combines traditional fortunetelling with the custom of after-meal toothpicks.

Common toothpicks are made of wood or bamboo, which waste timber and are hard to recycle. They are usually buried with the leftovers or used to feed livestock, where they may prick or injure the animals. LKK's toothpicks are made from degradable materials like starch, which melts in a moist environment.

Many design teams are tackling these lifestyle problems, and some are crossing design borders. Architects are designing clothes; fashion designers are making furniture.

At LKK Design, which has focused on industrial design and product branding, the designers are working on carpet. Jia said all designers must explore life to find places in need of creativity.

New force, new designs

Besides seasoned designers, many new graduates are leaving their mark. Young designers are not given any special favor: their works must hold their own when pitted against experts'.

Song Ying, 25, studied design and began creating in 2007. Her cushions featuring Chinese characters are a combination of tradition and modernity and also reflect a special attitude toward life.

Another designer, Wu Zhuoyang, 26, graduated from the Central Academy of Fine Arts this year. His unique chairs, originally a post-graduate project in "Game Design Method," are on display at the exhibition.

One chair on display is called the Angel Chair. It was designed based on two random keywords: angel and clothes hanger. Wu designed the back of the chair in the shape of two wings to simulate the angel, and the details of the wings are shaped like hangers to give the chair an added function.

Wu used the method to create four other chairs: the Shadow Chair, based on the words dream, screamer and shadow; the Armored Chair, based on night, library and king; the Ladder Chair, based on acrophobia, ladders and giraffe; and the Moment Under the Sea, based on moment and seabed.

"Since the words are chosen at random, it creates strange and sometimes illogical requirements for the designer. When designers are forced to tie together such strange concepts in one design, something original is the result," Wu said.

Wu's method is a new attempt at providing furniture designers with inspiration.

The Angel Chair and Moment Under the Sea are already on display, but the exhibition is considering adding room to show his Ladder Chair, which is four meters tall.

Going to the market

Ma Jia was previously the curator of "2007 Spin Coin – 798 International Industrial Design Exhibition," then the largest exhibition held for local designers since the Beijing Cultural Creative Industries was formed in 2005.

Though the exhibition was considered a success and had a follow-up last year, Ma saw a fatal flaw: "Our local designers did not lack ideas and creativity. The problem was they couldn't turn their ideas into products. Most of the designs were only on paper," she said.

At the 2007 exhibition, many designers displayed their designs by showing blueprints or concept art. When the manufacturers tried to follow the blueprints, they found the products were actually impossible.

Ma said the designers failed to form an industry chain, and she decided to help.

Last year, only designs which had actually produced a prototype were accepted, forcing the designers to push their dreams into reality.

This year's exhibition, the Original Design Circle (ODC), is the largest trading platform for original works in the country. It is the missing link, so to speak, that can connect businesses and designers.

Each of Wu's chairs at the exhibition costs 2,000 yuan, and the Armored Chair made of stainless steels costs 7,000 yuan. It was expensive for a student to raise the money needed to complete the prototype. "For students, the biggest obstacle in design is capital. Some have good ideas, but cannot produce a prototype without financial backing," Wu said.

Starting this week, the exhibition will add price tags to the prototypes to promote trade and commerce. But many orders were placed even two weeks ago, some in small quantities, but still enough to exhaust the designers' supplies.

The next step for Wu is sales. Wu said plagiarism continues to plague the domestic furniture market. "People steal ideas and make new products, and then we see similar products under new brands," he said.

Wu decided to limit the quantity of his works to combat plagiarism, and set a base price of 5,000 yuan for his chairs on display.



Nail clippers

ell life

By Zhang Dongya

The Original Design Circle (ODC), an exhibition opened at The Village in Sanlitun last month, features works by dozens of designers, and selected from thousands of entries.

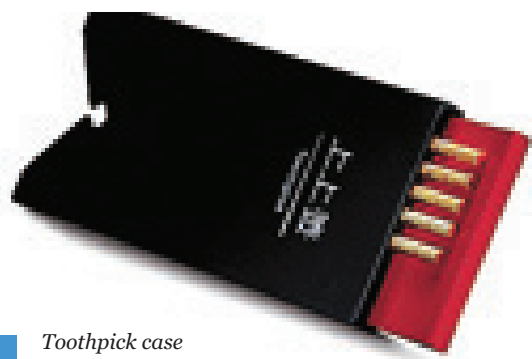
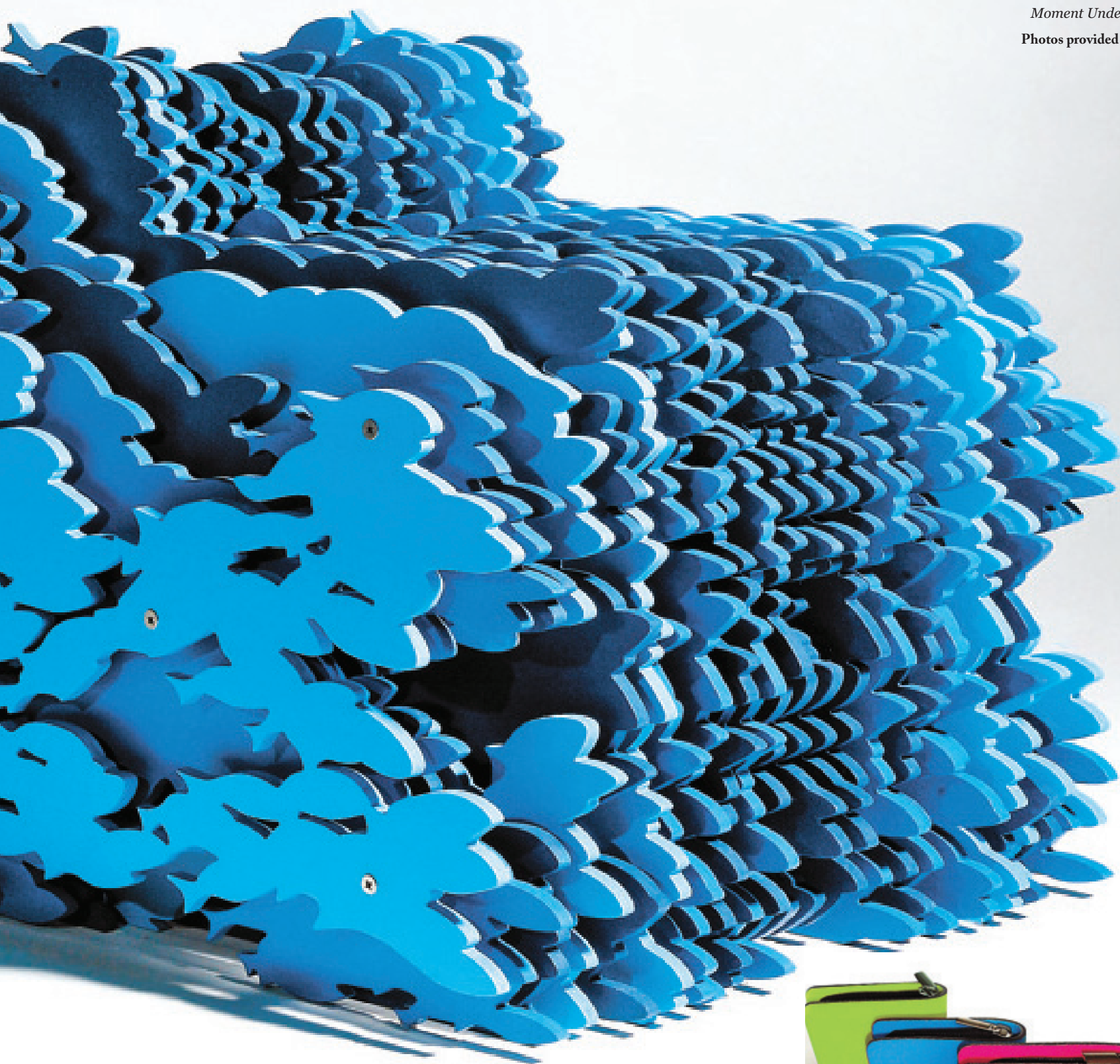
It is the first time local designers got to showcase their products in the city center, and it is the first major event of the kind organized by the Beijing Original Design Promotion Association (BODA).

Unlike BODA's exhibitions last year, the ODC is a breakthrough in industrializing the local design scene. "We did not expect such good business, and some of the works sold out after two weeks," Ma Jia, the ODC director, said.

The association is pushing to transform "Made in China" into "Created in China," and Ma said smooth channels between designers and businesses are important for that transformation.

Moment Under the Sea

Photos provided by Li Nan



Toothpick case

Photos provided by LKK Design



UNMASK



Key bags

Photos provided by Original Design Circle (ODC) Exhibition

Ford's utopia comes to a disheartening end

By Charles Zhu

Statesmen and businessmen have devised many utopias to improve the human condition: most fail.

Greg Grandin, a professor of history of New York University, gives an interesting and haunting story of the failed endeavor of Henry Ford, then the richest man on earth, to export his American dream to the jungles of Brazil in *Fordlandia: The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford's Forgotten Jungle City* (416pp, Metropolitan Books/Henry Holt & Co, \$27.50).

Fordlandia was a vast expanse of land in the Brazilian Amazon that the automobile magnate purchased. In 1927, Ford wanted his own supply of rubber: he decided to get it by carving a plantation and a miniature Midwest factory town out of the Amazon.

Ford's dream was not limited to growing rubber trees – he wanted to mold men. He thought he could make society more rational by building model factories and pristine villages around them. That may have worked in Michigan, but the jungle was another story.

As Leonor Weeks DeCeco recalled when she joined her father as an 8-year-old girl in Ford's jungle utopia, "We had everything that we really wanted. We

had a swimming pool, tennis court, golf course, and I had my animals – my Chico, which was a rare monkey."

"My dad was a construction engineer, and he was in charge of everything, and I enjoyed being down there with him," she says. But for pretty much everyone else, it was a hell of riot and blight.

The project did not start out well. There was an acute clash of cultures between America, Ford's utopian ideals and the way the indigenous people lived.

The first and most striking failure of Fordlandia was, understandably, social. "The first years of the settlement were plagued by waste and violence and vice. There were knife fights, there were riots over food and attempts to impose Ford-style regimentation," Grandin says. "When people ask me what Fordlandia was like, I tell them to think more of Deadwood than Our Town."

Quarrels erupted over such simple stuff as serving food. "Ford had very particular understandings about what a proper diet should be. He tried to impose brown rice and whole-wheat bread and canned peaches and oatmeal – and that itself created discontent."

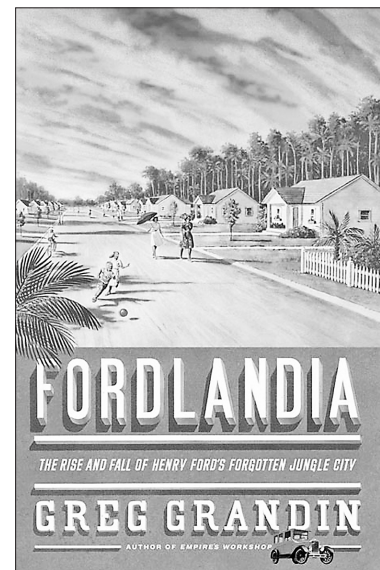
But when an American administrator changed the way food was served – from wait service to cafeteria-style service

– the workers rebelled. Angry workers destroyed the mess hall, pushed trucks into the river and nearly ruined the whole operation. It caused tens of thousands of dollars in damage, Grandin says.

Ford did not want to tame men – his target was the entire Amazon. "Ford basically tried to impose mass industrial production on the diversity of the jungle," Grandin says. But the Amazon is one of the most complex ecological systems in the world, and that did not fit Ford's plan. "Nowhere was this more obvious and more acute than when it came to rubber production," Grandin says.

Ford had such distrust in agro-experts that he never even consulted one about the rubber tree. If he had, he would have learned that plantation rubber cannot be grown in the Amazon in the first place. "The pests and the fungi and the blight that feed off of rubber are native to the Amazon. Basically, when you put trees close together in the Amazon, what you in effect do is create an incubator-but Ford insisted." The plantation provided the hot bed for the growth of caterpillars, leaf blight and other organisms that prey on rubber, Grandin says.

The people who were brought down from Michigan had a hard time in the



rainforest. "They succumbed to the heat, the oppressive humidity," Grandin says. "Wives who accompanied the men down to Fordlandia had less to do. Men, at least, were charged with trying to build the town, trying to build a plantation."

Fordlandia is a story about Ford's ego-driven bid for utopia. As one disaster followed another, Ford continued to pour dollars into the project. Not one drop of latex from Fordlandia ever made it into a Ford tire. But the more it failed, the more Ford was fascinated with the project in idealistic terms. "It increasingly was justified as a work of civilization, or as a sociological experiment," Grandin says. In the end, Ford's utopia failed.

Fordlandia sold at a loss in 1945.

Africa's greatest writer translated

By He Jianwei

There have been four Nobel Laureates in literature from Africa: Wole Soyinka in 1986, Naguib Mahfouz in 1988, Nadine Gordimer in 1991 and John M. Coetzee in 2003.

But missing from their ranks is Chinua Achebe, the father of modern African literature. The Nigerian *The Sun News* called this misstep to attention when it ran "Chinua Achebe deserves Nobel Prize" in 2006.

Achebe has the most readers in Africa. His first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, is the most read book in modern African literature.

Raised by Christian parents in the Igbo village of Ogidi in southeastern Nigeria, Achebe's novels focus on the traditions of Igbo society, the effect of Christian influences and the clash of values during and after the colonial era.

In 1987, he was the finalist for the Man Booker Prize for Fiction with *Anthills of the Savannah*, called the most important novel to come out of Africa in the 1980s.

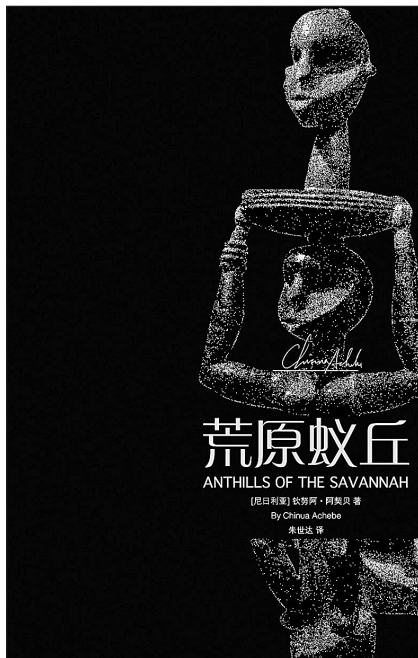
To introduce Achebe to Chinese readers, Chongqing Publishing House released a series of Achebe books in Chinese, including *Anthills of the Savannah* (translated by Zhu Shida, 275pp, 26 yuan) in June.

Anthills is reminiscent of George Orwell's *1984*, set in the eponymous year and in an dystopian future run by a totalitarian regime.

Achebe's book tells the story of three schoolmates who become major figures in the imaginary West African country of Kangan – Chris Oriko, the government's Commissioner for Information; Beatrice Okoh, an official in the Ministry of Finance and the girlfriend of Chris; and Ikem Osodi, a newspaper editor critical of the country.

A Sandhurst-trained officer, identified only as Sam and known as His Excellency, has taken power following a military coup in the regime.

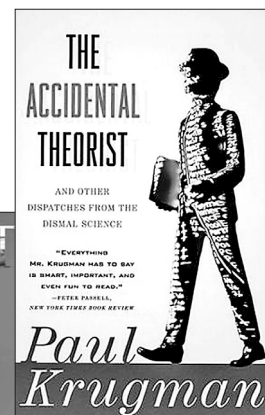
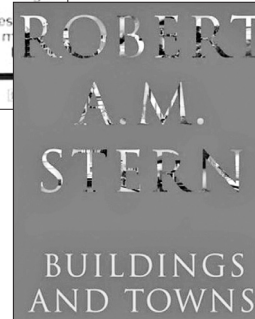
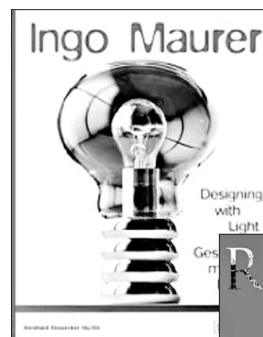
Sam has become a leader without regard for his people, seeking only to acquire more power for himself by any means necessary.



Oriko and Osodi realize that Sam is rapidly becoming a dictator. They helped get him appointed to the position, even encouraging him when he felt that his military background was inadequate preparation for a position of such importance. Now, Oriko and Osodi regret their previous support and seek to control Sam in their own ways.

Tensions escalate, culminating in the assassination of Osodi, the toppling and death of Sam and the murder of Oriko. The novel ends with a non-traditional naming ceremony for Osodi's month-old daughter, organized by Okoh.

The *Financial Times* called it "a powerful fusion of myth, legend and modern styles, Achebe has written a book which is wise, exciting and essential, a powerful antidote to the cynical commentators from 'overseas' who see nothing ever new out of Africa."



CNPIEC Bookstore book listing

The China National Publication Import and Export Corporation's (CNPIEC) bookstore recommends these new arrivals to *Beijing Today* readers.

Robert A. M. Stern: Buildings and Towns

By Robert A. M. Stern, 650pp, Monacelli, 750 yuan

Stern's book explores a wide range of building types, including libraries, university buildings, cultural centers, offices, health care facilities, court-houses and recreational complexes completed throughout the world over the past 20 years.

The Accidental Theorist

By Paul Krugman, 204pp, W.W. Norton & Co., 100 yuan

Paul Krugman tackles bad economic ideas from across the political spectrum. In plain English, he explains the Asian crisis, corporate downsizing and the globalization of the US economy, among other topics. The writing combines the

acerbic style and clever analysis that has made Krugman famous.

Ingo Maurer: Designing With Light

Edited by Bernhard Dessecker, 288pp, Prestel Publishing, 440 yuan

Ingo Maurer has been illuminating lives since 1966, when he designed his first light fixture for an installation at the Herman Miller showroom in Munich. His creation was entitled Bulb and featured a light bulb within a light bulb. The design was so successful that Maurer had to produce more to match the demand. Since then, his fascination with lighting, his pursuit of simplicity of form, and his talents as a graphic designer and typographer have brought him to the forefront of his field. His work has been exhibited in countless museums and it has brightened urban bridges, artistic exhibitions, retail and commercial spaces as well as numerous homes.

(By He Jianwei)



When Chopin meets Contra

A symphony of games

By He Jianwei

The jungle music from *Contra*, Konami's run-and-gun video game from 1987, is considered one of the most recognizable game tunes in history. Many players may have forgotten how to get past the second boss, but they can probably recognize the fanfare played as they advance to the next level.

Two US game music composers decided to rope a symphonic orchestra into putting these classics on the classical stage. Their Video Games Live (VGL) is the largest and most successful video game concert, having performed worldwide to over 300,000 people. This weekend, the composers will perform familiar songs from 50 classic video games on Beijing's stage.

Tommy Tallarico and Jack Wall created the VGL. Tallarico has been a game music composer for 18 years, and Wall has worked on the music for 30 games including the *Myst* series, *Splinter Cell*, *Jade Empire* and *Mass Effect*.

They came up with their idea in 2002 and the show, performed by the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, premiered at the Hollywood Bowl in 2005.

"We created the VGL to prove to the world how culturally significant and artistic video games have become. We created the show, not only for gamers, but for everyone to enjoy," Tallarico says.

The concert started as the two pored over fan emails and thought about a way they could work together. "We asked ourselves, 'Why not a concert?'" Wall said.

It took three years for them to convince the publishers to get involved. "At first, everyone thought we were crazy. Everyone refused five or six times, but we refused to take no for an answer," Tallarico says.

The bigger challenge was convincing the orchestras.

Tallarico drew on his personal experience in convincing them. He grew up a rock 'n' roll nut, and it was not until he heard John Williams' score to *Star Wars* that he found an interest in Beethoven and classical music.

"We want to recreate that experience and get the younger generation involved. Not only that, but we get to show video games to an older audience. The patrons at the symphonies that come all the time – many of them won't have played a game before," he says.

They performed at the Hollywood Bowl to 16,000 people in 2005. "People rehearse their entire career and dream of the Hollywood Bowl. So we came along and thought, if we were only going to do one show, it should be there," Wall said.

Things snowballed. The team ended up doing three shows during the first year. In 2006, there were 11 shows. In 2007, it increased to 29. Last year, they performed at 52 shows. This year they will perform at 75.

Although Japan has had many video game concerts, "it is strictly a symphonic experience over there. But we did not want to do that," Tallarico said.

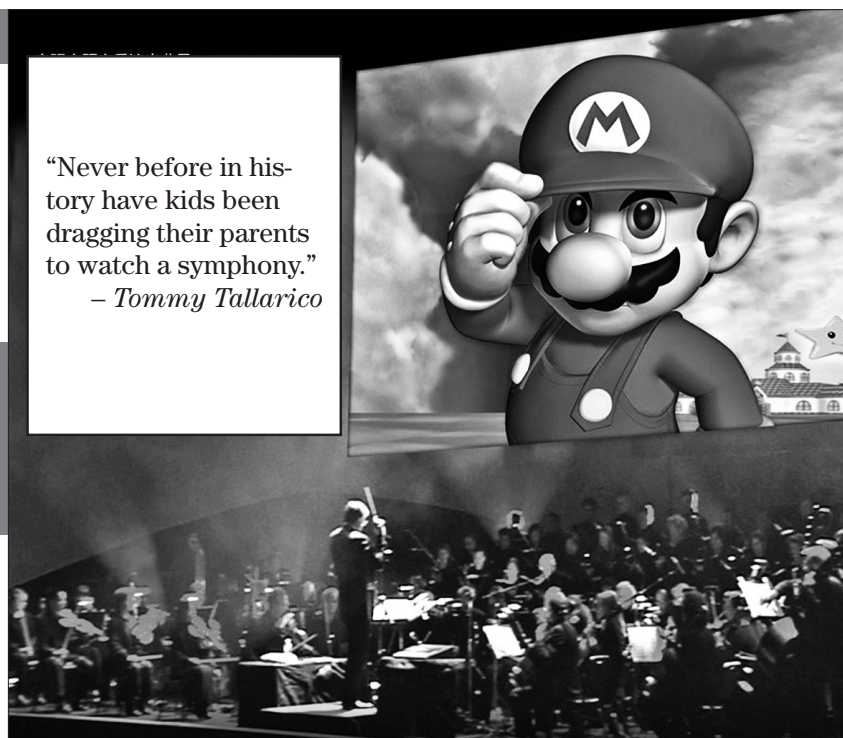
"Our idea was that there seems to be a disconnect between people who grew up on video games. We grew up on them—grew up on *Star Wars*, MTV and interactivity. We wanted to combine all that with the orchestra, as they don't generally connect with the younger audience," Tallarico said.

What makes the VGL unique is its beautiful visuals, rock lighting effects and its technology used for dramatic special effects.

"No matter where we go, video games are played and are an important part of the culture. Games are revered and loved everywhere," Tallarico said.

"Never before in history have kids been dragging their parents to watch a symphony."

— Tommy Tallarico



Jack Wall conducts with one eye on the screen and the other on the orchestra.

They started their world tour in 2006. In Brazil, "The fans are so crazy and they scream, chant and sing along the entire show," he said.

The second show was in Taiwan. "Don't worry if they don't clap, [we were told]. It doesn't mean they don't enjoy it, because they are quite a reserved culture." The fans went crazy when VGL performed. "My advisors had to admit that they had been wrong," he said.

On the stage, Wall conducts with one eye on the screen and the other on the orchestra. Tallarico handles the video. "I take the greatest scenes and work together with the game publishers to produce new and exciting visuals for the show," he said.

During one interactive segment, they bring someone from the audience up to play a game, and the orchestra adapts its music to match the action.

At last year's London show, they used *Guitar Hero* music by Aerosmith. Tallarico played electric guitar while the player used the plastic guitar controller. The rest of the music was played by the live orchestra.

As artists, they said their job is to entertain the audience. "If Beethoven was alive today, this is exactly how he would be doing it. When Tchaikovsky performed his music he had live cannons fired onstage for the percussion. These guys were showmen and entertainers. We need to take away the

elitism and snobbery. If it were not for film and video game music, who knows what excitement there would be in classic music today," Tallarico says.

The music industry released statistics last year showing that video game music accounted for 23 percent of total industry earnings, making it its top revenue stream.

Video games are as relevant as any other form of entertainment, "but culture takes time to evolve and become mainstream. In 10 year's time, we will have a prime minister or a president who has grown up playing video games. [It will be] as much a part of their lives as TV was for us and radio for the generation before us," he said.

"We are taking the class boundaries and snobbery away from classical music and introducing a new audience to its world."

— Tommy Tallarico

Video Games Live

Where: Capital Indoor Stadium, 5 Baishi Qiao, Xizhimen Wai, Haidian District

When: September 5, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-1,280 yuan

Tel: 6417 0058; 6417 0068



Video Games Live in Taiwan last year.

Chic cheap home ornaments



Boxes with classic Chinese patterns, starting from 60 yuan

By Annie Wei

The Liangma Flower Market near Sanyuanqiao is the place for shoppers on a budget who want to do up their homes. On the first floor is a paradise of flowers; on the second is everything you have ever wanted for your apartment and some things you never knew you did.

The most popular shop on the upper floor is the one that sells kitchen glassware. Most restaurants and bars in town buy their wine, cocktail and beer glasses here. The glasses come in many shapes and sizes, and are of pretty good quality since they are made for export. The factory's excess production ends up at Liangma and sells for 5 to 12 yuan each.

Big glass bowls and plates cost 30 to 50 yuan. Vases go from 10 to 50 yuan, cheaper than anything you will find in a department store. Buying in bulk will get customers an even better deal, so this is where it pays off to shop with friends.

The store also sells pricier objects, like crystal glasses at 80 to 100 yuan. There's no harm in trying to bargain; this writer's efforts landed her a 20-percent discount.

Beside the glass shop is a shop that sells gift wrappings, ribbons and accessory boxes. The beautifully designed boxes, which come in various sizes, cost from 35 to 150 yuan. The owner Su Yanli said the relatively high price is due to the materials they use for the frames.

"The really cheap ones are made of paper, but ours is wood. The wooden frame makes the boxes more durable," she said.

Su said most of her customers are companies who order custom-built gift boxes. But she said the shop accepts made-to-order requests for just one piece.

Another adjacent store sells candles and porcelain. This is a good place to be familiar if you are planning a Mid-autumn Festival gathering with friends, especially a garden party where people are gazing at the moon while munching on mooncake.

The shop sells candles (10 to 48 yuan) that can drive away mosquitoes. It also has red lanterns at 15 yuan each.

There are also some handmade soaps in scents like cypress, fir needle, peppermint, lemongrass and lavender. They cost 35 yuan for every 90 grams. The staff said these are leftovers from a shipment for Canadian company.

Shoppers will find more interesting things as they browse the rest of the stores. There is one that sells scented oil burners at 10 yuan; you will not find anything cheaper than 35 yuan in department stores.

Liangma Flower Market

Where: Yi 8, Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 9 am - 5 pm

Tel: 6466 9444

Photos by Annie Wei/ Huang Xiao



Accessory box, 35 yuan



Container, 60 yuan



NE•TIGER 2010 autumn and winter series



NE•TIGER released its new series for 2010 at its shop in Harbin last week.

The brand believes the crossover design, combining fur, cashmere and leather, will be the highlight of the 2010 autumn and winter season. Abstract and geometrical patterns, paired with simple or metallic colors, gave the new collection a dramatic effect. Also back were classic black and white, along with earth tones - the staple colors for autumn and winter.

NE•TIGER believes vests and sleeves will become the focus in 2010. Techniques like let-out, applique, perforation, knit fabric, shorn velvet and laser print were used in the new series to emphasize the beauty of fur.

Miss World 2007 Zhang Zilin and actors Zhang Hanyu, Kou Zhenhai and Liao Jingsheng attended the fashion show.

Established in 1992, NE•TIGER is a luxury brand synonymous with fur, evening gowns and wedding dresses. In 2005, it became the first Chinese company to gain membership in the Purple Club of Copenhagen Fur, which guarantees the quality of fur used by member-companies.

"NE•TIGER is dedicated to the revitalization of the Chinese luxury market, a lifestyle that aims to make dreams a reality, and for the elite to create unparalleled experiences. The 'n' in NE•TIGER stands for noble, 'e' stands for elegant while 'tiger' symbolizes the demeanor of royalty," Zhang Zhifeng, the company's founder and director, said at the show.

(By Yu Shanshan)

Photos provided by NE•TIGER



Food trip to Tianjin

By Annie Wei

Now that summer and its oppressive heat is history, going on short trips out of town has become more enjoyable.

A popular destination for Beijingers is Tianjin, 30 minutes away by high-speed rail. The treaty port city's attractions are famous – concession architecture, the Ancient Culture Street, the Antique Market – but where do you go for good food?

Beijing Today turns to *Elegance*, Tianjin's lone fashion and lifestyle magazine, for the answer. Its editor Tian Yuan and photographer Zhou Pu discuss three of their favorite dining places.



Handmade buckwheat noodle, 35 yuan

A corner of real Japan

Over two decades, Tianjin's development zone has become home to many foreign companies – particularly Japanese factories. It is not surprising, therefore, that the port city has a significant Japanese population – and a considerable number of Japanese dining places.

One of these is Uchida, a favorite among Japanese expats who make up 80 percent of the restaurant's customers. Some come with their colleagues; others with their families. The atmosphere can sometimes make you feel like you've been transported to Japan.

It is owned by a Japanese man who is very picky when it comes to ingredients. Dishes like tempura are only deep-fried in olive oil; soybean sauce and miso are shipped from Japan.

Uchida's star dish is their limited, handmade buckwheat noodle. The chef only makes enough for 40 people a day – an effort that already takes four to five hours of work.

The noodles (35 yuan) are served in bamboo baskets and come with a light soup. Guests can also order it with yam (40 yuan), seafood (50 yuan) and shrimp (55 yuan).

The restaurant is similarly known for its thick slices of fresh sashimi, as well as its home-brewed buckwheat spirits with green tea powder.

Two diners can order the special set that includes cold dishes, sashimi, tempura and buckwheat noodles for 120 yuan per person.

The fried meat set costs 35 yuan; vegetable set 30 yuan; and salmon sashimi 45 yuan. Oolong tea is 10 yuan a bottle.

Uchida is a hit among the city's Japanese residents, but Chinese diners might find the flavor of its food too light.

Uchida

Where: B1 Shidai Aocheng Plaza, Lingbing Lu, Nankai District

Open: 5: 30 am – 11: 30 pm, with lunch hours on the weekend

Tel: 022-2385 5021



Sashimi, starting from 45 yuan

Photos by Zhou Pu

Shanghai favorites in a quiet, old neighborhood

Jianzuocai Restaurant is located in the vicinity of Wudadao, a quiet neighborhood that is a museum of early-20th-century European architecture. At the time, Tianjin and Shanghai were known as the "two shining pearls of the East."

People who get exhausted from sight-seeing can go to Jianzuocai for some nourishment. Its chief cook comes from Shanghai and has been in the business for 16 years.

The restaurant's shrimp dishes are its most popular because of the shellfish's freshness and tenderness. The fried shrimps (38 yuan), a golden color, are crispy outside but tender inside. The fried shrimp balls (38 yuan), rolled with mustard, acquire a subtle layer of flavors.

Other recommended dishes include tangcu xiaopai (45 yuan), or sweet and sour spareribs, which has a slight plummy taste. Chashaoshu (15 yuan) is a pastry stuffed with barbecue pork.

Jianzuocai's xiaolongbao (15 yuan), a Shanghai-style dumpling, has a thin dough covering but a lot of juice – the sign of high-quality.

Diners should also try the special chicken wings (25 yuan) and rice cooked with duck and mushrooms (25 yuan). For dessert, there's mango pudding (10 yuan).

The cozy, two-story restaurant has smoking and non-smoking areas. The first floor contains white and yellow sofas, while the upper floor has big, airy windows.

With its soothing background music and lovely garden with bamboo and a pond, Jianzuocai is also an ideal place to bring your sweetheart. But the romantic atmosphere outdoor can be ruined by pesky mosquitoes.

Jianzuocai Restaurant

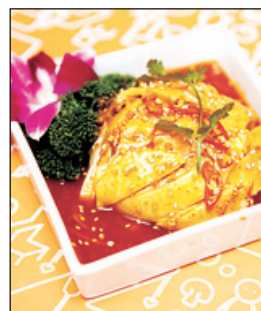
Where: Inside Fuxing Garden, Tongguan Dao, Heping District

Open: 11 am – 11 pm

Tel: 022- 2331 2883



Xiaolongbao, 15 yuan



Spicy chicken, 20 yuan

Photos by Zhou Pu

Expert in health and rich flavors



Steamed fish with goji berry and chrysanthemum, 48 yuan



Grilled fish, 45 yuan Photos by Zhou Pu

In traditional Chinese medicine, food is used to heal and prevent chronic diseases.

Millet congee, for instance, is prescribed for insomnia; red dates for poor circulation; and pig skin for collagen-deficiency. Our fast-food oriented life, however, leaves little room for these in our daily diet.

Yihe seeks to fill this gap by serving Sichuan dishes based on medicinal theory. If you expect meals that taste like bitter herbal medicine, you are in for a surprise.

The restaurant's steamed fish with goji berry and chrysanthemum (48 yuan) combines the light flavor of fish and flower. Goji berry is believed to increase energy levels, the quality of sleep, mental acuity, calmness and feelings contentment. Chrysanthemum is prescribed to combat autumn's drying effects on the body.

Sugarcane and water chestnut juice (15 yuan) is a Chinese favorite, which

provides relief from the notoriously Sichuan spicy cuisine.

Yihe's other specialties include wild mushroom soup (10 yuan per bowl; 90 yuan per wok); steamed fritillary and pear (25 yuan); grilled mussels (10 yuan); and yangzhi ganlu (20 yuan), a Cantonese dessert with mango, grapefruit, coconut milk and sago.

When the food comes, the servers will explain each dish's medicinal benefits.

The restaurant is located on Shanggu Commercial Street, a popular new spot in Tianjin dotted with upscale dining places. It has three floors, with a golden reclining Buddha at its entrance hall and walls lined with glasses containing Chinese medicines.

Yihe

Where: Room 51-52 Building E, Tianta Dao, Nankai District

Open: 11 am – 10 pm

Tel: 022-2341 6868; 2341 6767

Shakespeare's shrew returns to China after two decades

By He Jianwei

Germany's Stuttgart Ballet will stage in Beijing next month *The Taming of the Shrew*, first performed in China 22 years ago.

The Shakespeare comedy, which will be presented in two acts, is choreographed by South African John Cranko, who brought his *Prince of the Pagodas* to Stuttgart on his initial visit in 1960. He stayed for three years in the southern German city to nurture a troupe that has since become the country's finest classical dance company.

When Cranko became Stuttgart Ballet's director in 1961, a new phase in the company's history began. The choreographer also renewed and redefined the genre of full-length narrative ballets with his productions of *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and Aleksandr Pushkin's *Onegin*. Dancers worldwide covet a leading role in one of these ballets.

Cranko's version of *The Shrew*, which premiered in



1969, tells through subtle gestures Petruchio's taming of Katherina, while keeping Shakespeare's wit and melodic prose. It also incorporates the irony found in the English playwright's text as the stormy, ever-changing relationship between Katherina and Petruchio unfolds.

Katherina, an intelligent and outspoken woman, is thought to be a shrew because she resents the special attention men give her empty-headed and vain sister

Bianca. Petruchio marries her for her money and then sets out to win her heart by plotting to gain her submission.

In the first part of the story, Katherina is the more dominant character while Petruchio is the suitor. In the second, he becomes the more dominant person; she the obedient wife. In the end, they find balance and true love.

The ballet's triumphant taming scene, with its humor and delirious body movements, is one of the drama's highs.

But the question of who really tames who remains unresolved at the final curtain. *The Shrew* is one story that tickles the funny bone while at the same time touching the heart.

Stuttgart Ballet: The Taming of the Shrew

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: October 9-11, 7:30 pm
Admission: 120-600 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Upcoming

Exhibition

Warrior Within - Wang Fei Solo Exhibition
Where: New Millennium Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: September 19 - October 19, daily, 10 am - 7 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 13911166261

Stage in October

Concert

Rundfunk Blasorchester Leipzig

Where: Forbidden City Music Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), 4 Zhonghua Lu, Dongcheng District

When: October 4, 7:30 pm
Admission: 50-580 yuan
Tel: 6559 8306

The Vienna Boys Choir Asia Tour 2009

Where: Forbidden City Music Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), 4 Zhonghua Lu, Dongcheng District

When: October 10-11, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-680 yuan
Tel: 6559 8306

Strings and Keyboard Collective - Chamber Music II

Where: Beijing Concert Hall, 1 Bei Xinhua Jie, Xicheng District
When: October 14, 7:30 pm
Admission: 50-150 yuan
Tel: 5166 1145

Sounds of Finland - Midori Meets Sibelius

Where: Beijing Concert Hall, 1 Bei Xinhua Jie, Xicheng District
When: October 16, 7:30 pm
Admission: 50-150 yuan
Tel: 5166 1145

Sounds of Africa - Boys Choir of Kenya

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: October 25, 7:30 pm
Admission: 50-150 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

Dance

San Francisco Ballet China Tour 2009

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: October 1-3, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-1,680 yuan
Tel: 6551 8058

The Taming of the Shrew by the Stuttgart Ballet

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: October 9-11, 7:30 pm
Admission: 120-800 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

Opera

Dragon and Phoenix - Peking Opera

Where: Chang'an Theater, 7 Jianguomen Nei Dajie, Dongcheng District
When: October 16, 7:30 pm
Admission: 100-980 yuan
Tel: 6510 1155

Xishi

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District
When: October 28 - November 5, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-880 yuan
Tel: 6655 0000

(By Jackie Zhang)

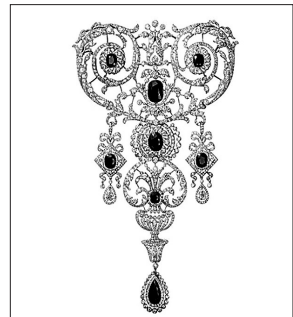
5 Friday, September 4

Exhibition

Origin of Chinese Civilization

Where: Capital Museum, 16 Fuxingmen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District

When: Until October 30, daily except Monday, 9 am - 5 pm (reservation necessary)
Admission: Free
Tel: 6339 3339; 6337 0491



Cartier Treasures

Where: Meridian Gate Exhibition Hall, the Forbidden City, 4 Jingshanqian Jie, Dongcheng District

When: Until November 22, daily, 8:30 am - 5 pm
Admission: 20 yuan to see only the exhibition; free with

ticket to the Forbidden City
Tel: 6513 2255

Movie

Arakimentari

Where: Duo Cafe, 3 Guowang Hutong, Jiugulou Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 8 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 8404 5129

White

Where: Lele Bar (50 meters east of the Communication University of China's north gate), Dingfuzhuang, Chaoyang Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6576 5987

Nightlife

Handsome Furs

Where: MAO Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm
Admission: 80 yuan
Tel: 13811799436

Punk Tonight

Where: Lao What Bar, 72 Bei Chang Jie, Xicheng District

When: 9 pm
Admission: 30 yuan
Tel: 13341122757

6 Saturday, September 5

Exhibition

Dance in Dream - Zhao Gang Solo Exhibition

Where: Triumph Art Space, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until October 4, daily except Monday, 10 am - 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 8459 9639

On Unities

and Divisions - Berlin

Where: Thread Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until September 15, daily except Monday, 10 am - 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 9667

Park Hee Seop Solo Exhibition

Where: Gallery Artside Beijing, Space 2, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until September 22, daily except Monday, 10 am - 7 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 9192

Movie

Doctor Ma's Country Clinic

Where: Caihuoche Salon, 46 Fangjia Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: 1 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6406 0658

Nightlife

2 Kolegas 9.5 Saturday

Band: Fire Balloon
Careless
Steely Heart
Rolling Rolling
pretend otherwise
if you'd like but the truth is we are animals

2 Kolegas

Where: 2 Kolegas, 21 Liangmaqiao Lu (inside the Fenghuayuan drive-in cinema), Chaoyang District

When: 10 pm
Admission: 40 yuan; 30 yuan for students
Tel: 6436 8998

Salty suger band

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: 9:30 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 6401 4611

7 Sunday, September 6

Exhibition

Lee Doo Shik Solo Painting Exhibition

Where: Gallery Artside Beijing, Space 1, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until October 9, daily except Monday, 10 am - 7 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5978 9192

Things - New Works by Guo Hongwei

Where: Chambers Fine Art,

Red No. 1-D, Caochangdi, Chaoyang District

When: Until October 24, daily except Monday, 10 am - 6 pm
Admission: Free
Tel: 5127 3298

Nightlife

Stratovarius

Where: MAO Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 8:30 pm
Admission: 230 yuan
Tel: 6402 5080

Wind on the Grassland

Where: D-22, 242 Chengfu Lu, Haidian District

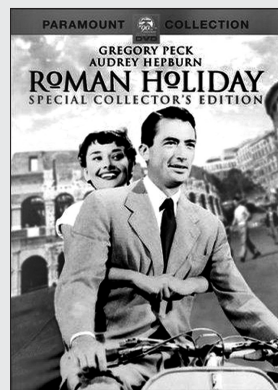
When: 9:30 pm
Admission: 30 yuan
Tel: 6265 3177

Movie

Roman Holiday

Where: Xiyuetiankong Bar, 1Y25 Ritan International Trade Center, 17 Ritan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 3 pm
Admission: 20 yuan
Tel: 8569 3722



Keeping kids safe from lead



By Wang Dong

Up to 200 children were diagnosed with lead poisoning in Yunnan Province in the third of a series of cases in the country this month, the *China Daily* reported on Monday.

Lead is a naturally occurring metal that was used for many years in products found in and around the home. However, it is toxic to everyone, and especially so to young children. Parents should be aware of the damage lead poisoning can cause and prevent it in advance.

Pb

Poisoning symptoms

"Children under six are most at risk of developing problems from lead poisoning, as their smaller, growing bodies make them more susceptible to absorbing and retaining lead," said Dai Yaohua, director of the China Children Healthcare Service Center.

After being ingested or inhaled, lead enters the bloodstream and is absorbed and stored in many tissues and organs, including the liver, kidneys, brain, teeth and bones, she said.

High levels of lead can cause serious health problems in children. Lead poisoning can affect the brain and central nervous system causing headaches, memory problems, reduced coordination,

learning disabilities, irritability, hyperactivity, increased sleep, decreased activity, fatigue, hearing loss, slow reflexes, weakness, seizure, coma and retardation.

Children's gastrointestinal and blood systems can also be affected by lead poisoning. Constipation, diarrhea, abdominal pain, vomiting, poor appetite, weight loss and anemia are common symptoms.

But not all children with lead poisoning are symptomatic. Blood tests are used to screen for lead poisoning. The normal lead content ranges from zero to 100 micrograms per liter of blood. Any concentration greater than 100 micrograms is excessive, and beyond 200 is severe.

Pb

How it occurs

"Lead can be inhaled, ingested or absorbed through the skin," Dai said. "The main pathway for young children is via ingestion of dust and soil due to their normal hand-to-mouth activity."

The metal can be found in many common objects:

1. Lead-based paint

The use of lead-based paints for new homes and household furniture can cause serious poisoning both in children and adults. Lead-based paint is common on the walls and woodwork of many older homes and apartments. Most lead poisoning in children results from eating flecks of crumbling lead-based paint. Glazes found on some pottery and porcelain also can contain lead that can leach into food. It may be found in toys, jewelry and hobby and sports equipment.

2. Soil

Contaminated soil is common alongside busy streets. Lead particles that settle on the soil from

gasoline or paint can last for years. Lead-contaminated soil is still a major problem around highways and in some urban settings.

3. Water

Lead pipes, brass plumbing fixtures and copper pipes soldered with lead can release lead particles into tap water.

4. Industrial wastes

Industrial waste, especially from lead mining, smelting, refining or manufacturing industries, is one major cause of lead poisoning, as is the atmospheric fallout of nearby industries.

5. Food

Eggs, fruit and vegetables grown near high-traffic areas or factories which work with lead often become contaminated. Food stored in bowls glazed or painted with lead, or sealed in a lead can, is always contaminated.

6. Household dust

Household dust can contain lead from paint or soil brought in from outside.



CFP Photo

Pb

Prevention

These tips can help reduce the risk of lead poisoning:

1. Clean hands frequently. Wash children's hands often, especially before they eat and before nap time and bedtime. Trim their nails frequently, as lead-contaminated dust often hides under the nail. Discourage them from putting their hands or other objects into their mouths.

2. Keep your home and family clean. Clean floors, window frames, windowsills and other surfaces weekly. Use a mop, sponge or paper towel with warm water and a general all-purpose cleaner or cleaner made specifically for lead. Keep play areas clean. Wash bottles, pacifiers, toys and stuffed animals regularly.

3. Know where your children play. Keep them away from busy roads and the undersides of overpasses.

4. Eat right. If children are exposed to lead, good nutrition can reduce the amount that will actually be absorbed in the body. Ensure that their diets are rich in iron and calcium. Eat more meat, dairy products and eggs. Eat less food that is likely to be contaminated with lead, like popcorn and preserved eggs.

5. Avoid lead objects. Eliminate lead-containing objects, such as blinds and jewelry, from the home and vacuum frequently. Do not buy porcelain from street vendors, as the products may contain lead. Never use newspapers to wrap food.

6. Don't smoke. Lead is a contaminant in cigarette smoke. Children who inhale smoke are at great risk of lead poisoning.

7. Be wary of old plumbing. In houses with lead pipes and solder, let cold water run from the faucet for a minute before drinking it. If possible, drink bottled water instead. Hot water absorbs more lead than cold water, so never use hot tap water when preparing meals.

Pb

Treatment

Treatment for lead poisoning varies depending on how much lead is in the blood. The first step in treatment is to remove the source of contamination. If you cannot remove the lead from your environment, you can at least reduce how often you come in contact with it.

For children with low lead levels, simply avoiding exposure may be enough. Gradually, as the body naturally eliminates the lead, its presence will fall.

Those with extremely high lead levels must be hospitalized to receive a medication called a chelating agent, which chemically binds with lead. The medication is delivered intravenously and helps the body to eliminate the lead more quickly.

By Zhang Dongya

Talk of Chinese grasslands immediately brings to mind Inner Mongolia. Less known are Hebei Province's grass-carpeted sprawling lands – the perfect place to visit in these rare perfect days of clear skies, gentle sunlight and soothing winds.

Below are two of Hebei's beautiful grasslands that are easily accessible from Beijing. We highlight their extraordinary characteristics and feature attractions.

Seeking the magic in Hebei

A picturesque view of grasslands in autumn



Feihuyu Canyon in Yuxian County



The Sky Grassland is also called "sky flower garden" for its various wild flowers.



Edelweiss grows in large areas of grassland in Yuxian County. Photos by Wujuan Zhaizhu

Sky Grassland in Yuxian County

Yuxian County, in northwestern Hebei, is where people can find a vast grassland on a plateau. At such a high altitude, the grassland seems to touch the sky, thus its name Sky Grassland.

It is situated in the south of the country. To reach it, visitors have to pass the steep Feihuyu Canyon and Strange Slope. The canyon served as an important commercial passageway and military base during ancient times.

Strange Slope is a very steep section of land, but a car going uphill – even one that has lost its brakes – is in no danger of sliding backward. Some label this phenomenon an illusion, while others attribute it to a strong magnetic field in the area.

Near the top is a huge rock gate, which looks like a castle from far away. Just behind this structure is Sky Grassland.

At 2,000 meters above sea level, the grassland's scenery is breathtaking. Clouds, in the distance, seem to be floating at the edge of the land. On one side are gentle slopes where tourists emerge from the heart of the mountain on horseback.

Since the grassland is located high above most communities, there is no problem of overgrazing. And with the mountain's abundant rainfall, the grass here is lush

and wild. People can see crickets and grasshoppers jumping out from the thick growth. Scattered around are huge rocks, which locals say are parts of a meteorite.

The grassland is also a paradise of wild flowers, so some people call it "sky flower garden." There are red morning-star lilies, white windflowers and scores of others this writer has not seen before.

But the edelweiss, a small white flower, is considered the most beautiful. It is the national flower of Austria and Switzerland, and became the inspiration for a song in the film *The Sound of Music*.

This rare plant grows in large areas of grassland in Yuxian County, which itself has gained fame as The Hometown of Edelweiss in China.

Note that the weather in Sky Grassland can change rapidly. There might be bright sunshine one minute, then the next, dark skies and pouring rain. And just when visitors have taken shelter inside tents, the storm clouds are gone and the smiling sun is back out.

Rainbows are a common sight here. City dwellers, who seldom get this treat, are often seen excitedly making a wish.

Sunset on the grassland is another picturesque moment: rosy clouds hover over the skyline, bidding good-bye to a magical day.

Continued on page 21...



Grasslands in Hebei Province provide a picturesque view in autumn. Photo by Zhao Yan

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Lakes in Mulan Paddock are called paozi.



Large grazing area for herds of sheep, cattle and horses



Dotted with lakes, Mulan Paddock served as the hunting ground of Emperor Kangxi in Qing Dynasty.

The imperial hunting ground of Mulan Weichang

Mulan Weichang, or Mulan Paddock, is located in the northernmost part of Hebei, adjacent to Inner Mongolia.

During the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911), the vast grassland dotted with lakes served as the hunting ground of Emperor Kangxi.

West of Mulan is Big Canyon, which is surrounded by a grazing area for herds of sheep, cattle and horses.

This used to be a playground for wild ani-

mals; now only rabbits and squirrels can be seen emerging from the nearby forest.

The lakes in Mulan are called *paozi*.

General Paozi, one of the largest lakes, was the site of the famous Battle of Ulaan Butun in 1690.

Xida Paozi, now called Princess Lake, is the largest. Its deep waters are home to a variety of fish, which visitors try to catch early in the morning. Birch trees surround most of the lake and are

reflected in its clear waters.

Other lakes, with fancy names like Seven-star Lake and Moon Lake, have equally beautiful surroundings.

Not far away are slopes like Five-color Hill, which turns a fiery color in autumn; Lama Hill famed for its magnificent sunrises; and Little Red Hill renowned for its dramatic sunsets.

Herdsmen and their families live on the foot of the hills, near the smaller lakes.



Forest of Birch trees in Mulan Weichang

Travel information

Sky Grassland

Getting there

Drive along Badaling Expressway and Jingzhang Expressway, then turn on Xuanda Expressway. Upon reaching Zhangshi Expressway, find Yuxian East Exit, which leads to Yu County. It takes about four hours by car to get to Sky Grassland.

Admission

Admission to the grassland is 50 yuan. Once there, tourists can hop on a sightseeing trolley, which stops at major attractions, for 40 yuan. Alternatively, visitors can travel on horseback for 60 yuan an hour or less.

Accommodations

Lodging at the scenic area costs 80 yuan per person or 200 yuan for a room with three beds. The closest hotel is in Feihu Shanzhuang, in Feihuyu. A

twin room there costs 120 yuan.

Notes

1. The temperature on the Sky Grassland is about 6 degrees lower than in Beijing. The average temperature this season is 12-20 C. People who are spending the night should bring warmer clothing.

2. Tourists who plan to stay a weekend night should make reservations early, since rooms go fast.

3. Yu County is famous for its paper-cutting art, especially in Nanzhang village, which is on the path to Sky Grassland. Visitors can stop to buy folk art or watch local craftsmen at work.

Mulan Weichang

Getting there

Drive along National Highway 101 toward Chengde, Hebei. Turn left at Shuangtashan, which

will take you all the way to Mulan Paddock. This trip can be hard on people's hind quarters; it takes about seven hours to reach the place.

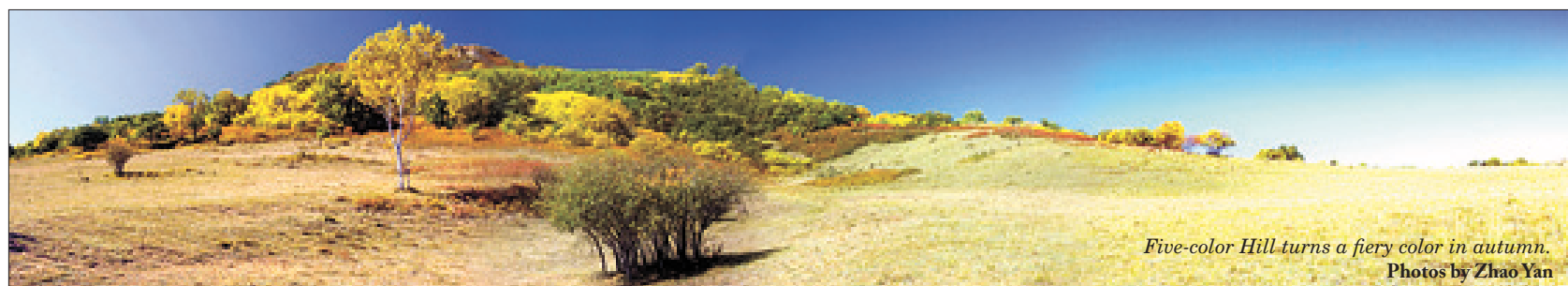
Visitors can also take a train from Beijing South Railway Station, and then get off at Siheyong Station.

Long-distance buses likewise travel from Xizhimen to Weichang County, after which travelers need to transfer to a bus to Mulan. The grassland may also be reached by bus from Chengde.

Since Mulan covers a vast area, it is advisable to go sightseeing on a vehicle. Visitors who do not bring a car can rent one in Weichang County. There are few cars for rent in the scenic area.

Accommodations

There are many hotels and restaurants around the Hongshanjun Stud Farm in Mulan. An overnight stay can cost from 60 to hundreds of yuan.

Five-color Hill turns a fiery color in autumn.
Photos by Zhao Yan

Pinnacle Plaza

Leisurely plaza with reasonable prices

By Jackie Zhang

Pinnacle Plaza, located in the central villa area in Shunyi District, is an important destination for residents nearby who are shopping for daily necessities.

Different from the concept of plazas at downtown, there are no tall buildings or shopping centers in Pinnacle. The plaza is a collection of independent houses and mini squares. There are cafes and bars, supermarkets, Western restaurants and a tailor shop.

Pinnacle is not that expensive, though it is in the middle of some upper-class villas. Many residents say prices are reasonable compared to other shopping centers in Shunyi.

Photo by Zhang Dongya



Healthy, organic Lohao lifestyle

By Zhang Dongya

Lohao City sells healthy products only: organic and green food, as well as environmentally-friendly commodities. It also offers imported food for expats.

Customers can find vegetables, fruits, eggs, meat, milk, grains and dried foods here. All products are certified as organic by either China, the European Union, the US, Japan or an international association.

Some of the foods come from ranches – located in Sanlihe, Miyun and Pinggu – managed by the owner of Lohao City. Lohao feeds its own chickens at the ranches to produce organic chickens and eggs.

Every Tuesday, its workers go to ranches to pick vegetables, fruits and other home-grown foods. Customers can order in advance on Tuesday and pick up the fresh harvest the same day.

A Lohao favorite is the homemade bread, especially baguettes (10 yuan) and ham and cheese croissants (16 yuan).

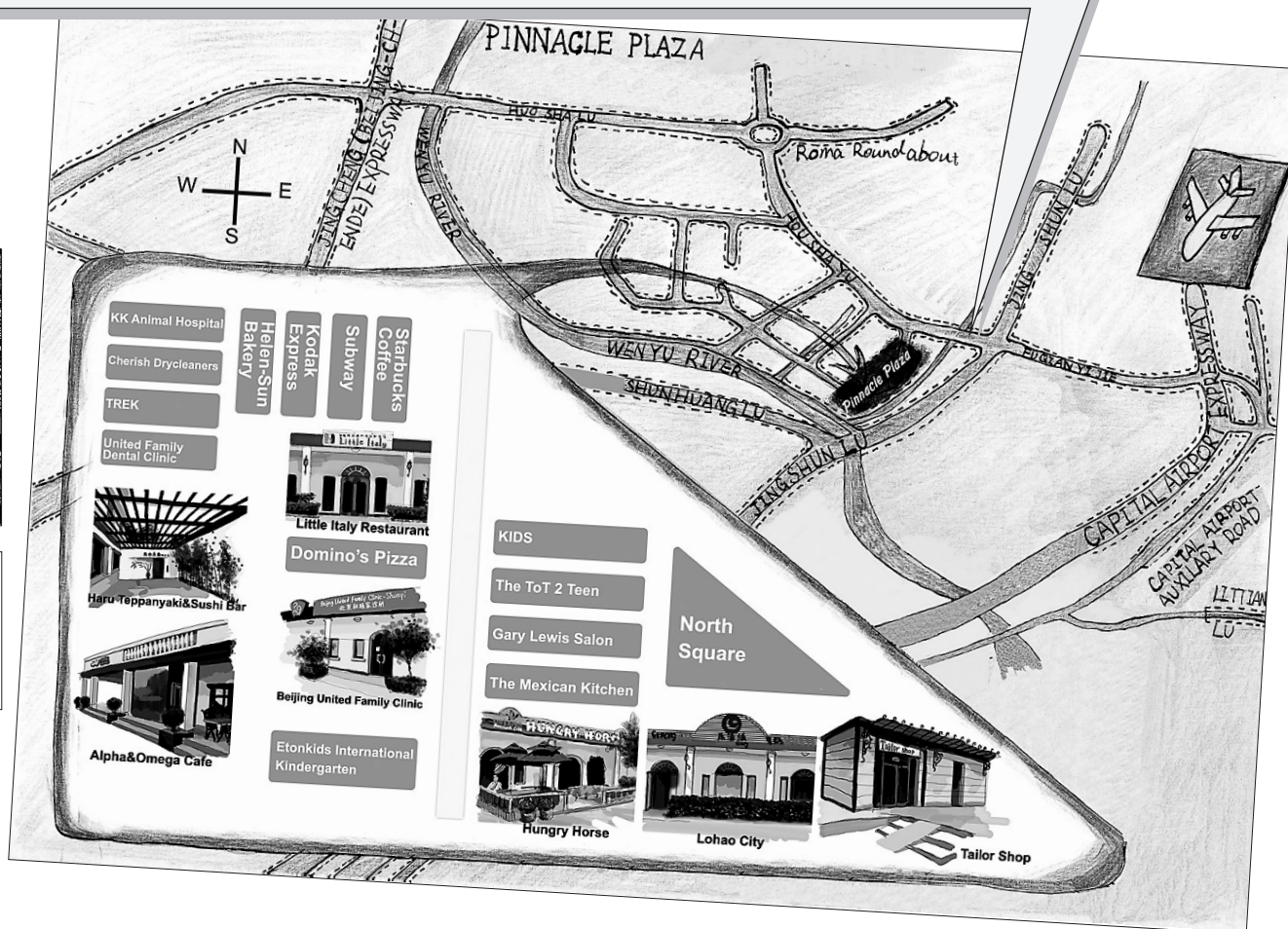
One salesman recommended charcoal filters, like a charcoal bag for the wardrobe (9 yuan), refrigerator (9 yuan) and shoe cabinet (12 yuan).

With the Mid-Autumn Day coming, Lohao City is introducing its new all-vegetarian moon cakes (158 yuan for eight pieces), which are less greasy.

Lohao City

Where: 608 Pinnacle Plaza, Tianzhu Development Zone, Shunyi District

Open: 9 am – 9 pm
Tel: 8046 6242



Illustrated by Jiao Shu



Traditional Chinese clothes can be ordered in the tailor shop.

Photo by Zhang Dongya

Quality tailoring service

By Zhang Dongya

Tailor Shop provides tailoring services for Chinese and Western clothes, ceremonial dresses and company uniforms.

It uses top-quality cloth like famous silk produced in Suzhou and Hangzhou. It also sells scarves and neckties.

Many foreigners and locals go to Tailor Shop to order a qipao. Most qipao cost 68 yuan per meter of cloth, or 660 to 700 yuan for the dress including labor. Customers who bring their own cloth need pay only 380 yuan for labor.

The manager Shao Xiaojun said 80 percent of the customers who have a suit made at his shop are expats. A business suit can range from 800 to 1,800 yuan depending on the material.

The best cloth is soft to the touch.

For traditional clothes, like a Chinese shirt, men usually need to pay 660 to 700 yuan. A women's suit or dress costs 700 to 750 yuan.

Most of the suits and dresses can be ready within a week, though they may require later adjustments. Customers are advised to leave enough time for their garments to be completed.

One customer surnamed Lynn Hu went to Tailor Shop to get a copy of her existing dress made using new silk. "The shop is very near my home, and can do what I ask," Hu said.

Tailor Shop

Where: 318 Pinnacle Plaza, Tianzhu Development Zone, Shunyi District
Open: 10:30 am – 7:30 pm
Tel: 8046 4517

Convenient medical care

Beijing United Family Hospital has two departments in Pinnacle Plaza: the BJU Shunyi clinic and a dental clinic.

The dental clinic, opened last March, is staffed by a team of Western dentists and hygienists. It offers the latest in dental service and technology. Preventive, restorative and cosmetic dentistry is available, including orthodontic care. Services range from routine cleanings to root canal therapy and fillings to full

mouth reconstruction.

Beijing United Family Clinic and Dental Clinic

Where: 806 Pinnacle Plaza, Tianzhu Development Zone, Shunyi District

Open: Monday – Saturday 8:30 am – 5:30 pm, Sunday 8:30 am – 5 pm

Tel: 8046 1102, 5927 7120 for emergency

(By Jackie Zhang)

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Traditional, home-made Italian specialties

By Venus Lee

Little Italy, at the heart of Pinnacle Plaza, prides itself on traditional, home-made Italian food.

The restaurant, owned by an American couple, has an extensive menu that includes daily specials and a selection of Italian and European wines and beers.

There is something here to suit everyone's palate, budget and schedule – whether you are a family with kids looking for a fast lunch or a couple on a romantic date looking for a leisurely dinner.

To start off, Little Italy's chef Taal Martin recommends the following appetizers: calamari fritti (deep-fried squid with smoked paprika

aioli, 30 yuan), bruschette (toasted bread with fresh tomato, garlic, herbs and olive oil, 25 yuan), mozzarella frita (deep-fried mozzarella cheese, 30 yuan) and salmone affumicato (marinated salmon with lemon and capers, 35 yuan).

For a main dish, try the restaurant's specialty pizzas. Martin suggests margherita (with tomato sauce and mozzarella cheese, 40 yuan), capricciosa (with tomato sauce, mozzarella cheese, ham, mushrooms, artichokes, black olives and oregano, 60 yuan), prosciutto e funghi (with tomato sauce, mozzarella cheese, ham and mushrooms, 50 yuan) and Hawaiian (with tomato sauce, mozzarella cheese, ham and pineapple,

50 yuan).

These can be enjoyed with zuppa di funghi (cream of mushroom soup with rucola and Parmesan cheese, 25 yuan) or zuppa di pesce (seafood soup, 35 yuan).

Other popular dishes are filetto (grilled tenderloin, 88 yuan), scaloppine al limone (pan-fried chicken cutlet with lemon sauce, 60 yuan) and pollo ai funghi (chicken stuffed with mushrooms and chestnuts in creamy mushroom sauce, 70 yuan).

Little Italy

Where: 813 Pinnacle Plaza, Tianzhu Development Zone, Shunyi District

Open: 11 am – 10 pm
Tel: 8046 4679



Dining area in Little Italy

Photos provided by Little Italy

500 Hong Kong dishes and counting

By Zhang Dongya

At Alpha & Omega, diners can find almost any Hong Kong dish they desire. The huge, five-year-old restaurant has a menu packed with more than 500 choices.

The two-story restaurant can seat 200 people, with private rooms on the upper floor and an open kitchen for noodles and roast meat on the first floor. It also provides free Wi-Fi.

Alpha & Omega serves baked pineapple buns (15 yuan for three) and wonton noodles (23 yuan), which are the ultimate test of whether a Hong

Kong restaurant is the real deal or a wannabe.

The restaurant's manager Loretta Guo recommends their American classical broil with sausage, chicken, beef and pork steak (78 yuan), as well as their instant noodle series (25 yuan), available in nine flavors such as beef in satay sauce and cooked ham and fried egg. Instead of boiled, customers can have their noodles fried for an additional 5 yuan. Guo says the noodle series can only be found at Alpha & Omega.

In early autumn, local diners

usually look for tonic soups to maintain their health during the changing season. Alpha & Omega offers fish head and bean curd soup (32 yuan, regular size).

To round off a meal, have a taste of its popular desserts: walnut soup (15 yuan) and mango pudding (22 yuan).

Alpha & Omega Cafe

Where: 900 Pinnacle Plaza, Tianzhu Development Zone, Shunyi District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm
Tel: 8046 2568



Photo provided by Alpha & Omega

Elegant Japanese for meetings and parties

By Zhang Dongya

Haru Teppanyaki and Sushi Bar was created to host private meetings and parties. It does not have a dining hall, but rather seven private rooms.

The place has an arty exterior design more commonly seen in galleries. Inside, the decor is simple but elegant.

The private rooms, which need to be booked days in advance, come in different sizes: there are "small" ones for up to four people; "medium" rooms for six to eight; and "large" that can seat a maximum of 10. The food is prepared by a chef in front of the diners.

As its name suggests, Haru is popular for its teppanyaki and sushi menu. It has also gained a following for its business lunch sets (78 to 112 yuan) that features a salad, soup, tofu, fried vegetables, fried rice and fruits.

Another restaurant specialty is the Haru rolls (50 to 85 yuan), which come in a set of eight pieces and are named after the servers, such as the Tina Roll, Mary Roll and Kevin Roll. Guests who share a name with a roll are always tickled at the discovery. The staff will explain the ingredients to first-timers.

Since August, Haru has sponsored cooking classes that teach how to make sushi. Lessons are free and participants can eat or take home their creations.

The teppanyaki and sushi bar is currently preparing to launch its second branch in town, expected to open by year-end at The Village in Sanlitun.

Haru Teppanyaki and Sushi Bar

Where: 902 Pinnacle Plaza, Tianzhu Development Zone, Shunyi District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm
Tel: 8046 5112



Teppanyaki is a customer favorite.

Photo provided by Haru

When you are as hungry as a horse

By Jackie Zhang

Hungry Horse, a two-year-old American Cafe, has gained a reputation in Shunyi District as a family restaurant that serves mouth-watering burgers.

"You have the best hamburger in this area," nearly every one of our customers has told me," Jin Hui, the general manager, says. Among their most popular are Texas smoke house

and American all-star.

Texas smoke house (46 yuan) is topped with bacon, pickled beef and barbecue sauce. American all-star (40 yuan) is your regular American cheeseburger prepared with choice beef patties.

The restaurant's decoration is patterned after a US diner's – wooden floors, wooden tables and chairs and sports memorabilia on the wall.

A majority of the diners are parents with their young children. As such, Hungry Horse provides not only food but entertainment for the younger ones: there are computers where customers can surf the Internet, children's English story books and a play area.

"Sixty to 70 percent of our customers are foreigners. The restaurant hopes to give them (Americans) a familiar environ-

ment, like what they find in their home country," Jin says. "Our main goal is to provide Western customers with food they have at home, with the same flavor and cooking style."

The name Hungry Horse means "as hungry as a horse, which indicates that the food we serve come in large quantities," Jin says.

Besides its main menu, the cafe has seasonal menus. This

month, its autumn offering will include American barbecues. In winter, they will prepare rich-tasting food such as Mexican dishes.

The Hungry Horse also provides catering service.

Hungry Horse

Where: 107 Pinnacle Plaza, Tianzhu Development Zone, Shunyi District

Open: 7 am – 10:30 pm
Tel: 8046 5521

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Pinnacle Avenue

Short, store-packed avenue

By Jackie Zhang

Pinnacle Avenue is the newly developed brother of Pinnacle Plaza. The avenue, located near the plaza, is more quiet and secluded.

Although Pinnacle Avenue is short, it has restaurants, medicine shops, furniture stores, clothing and bookstores, an entertainment center and a pediatric clinic. The restaurants serve mostly East-Asian fare, including Japanese and Vietnamese. The furniture shop sells outdoor furniture by world-famous brands. The entertainment center is sure to please children of all kinds and offers a great chance to make new friends.



Songrong soup



The bright dining space in Sasameyuki



Photos provided by Sasameyuki

Place with mild drizzle and gentle breeze

By Venus Lee

Sasameyuki has a very poetic Chinese name: *Hefengxiyu*, mild drizzle and gentle breeze.

Like its beautiful name, the environment and orthodox Japanese cuisine makes diners feel at home. The cream-colored walls, tables and sofas all make the restaurant a warm and refreshing place to have a meal with family, friends or clients.

The two-floor restaurant with a high-ceiling is spacious, bright and creatively arranged. The first floor is for tapasak, while the second floor is more tranquil and casual.

The restaurant imports its seafood and meat. The raw ingredients in the Hamahama oysters (38 yuan per oyster) and Barron Point oysters (38 yuan per oyster) are imported from Washington

DC. Only two restaurants serve this special oyster: Sasameyuki and the New Otani Chang Fu Gong Hotel.

The beef used in sizzling beef tenderloin (168 yuan) is imported from Australia, and the goose in sizzling goose liver (38 yuan) comes from France.

Burdock hand rolls (20 yuan per roll) and Sasameyuki sushi (88 yuan) are famous dishes too, and are very popular with young lovers.

That Matsutake Soup (60 yuan), rich in nutrition, also has helps prevent and treat diabetes, according to the manager, Zhang Binghui.

Sasameyuki

Where: 29 Pinnacle Avenue, Liyuan Jie, Tianzhu Development Zone, Shunyi District

Open: 10 am – 11:30 pm

Tel: 645884577

Test out the finest furniture

By Jackie Zhang

More people are considering outdoor life an important part of leisure time. Cozy and nice outdoor furniture that keeps you close to nature is an important part of the experience.

The showroom in Sunstyle outdoor furniture at Pinnacle Avenue gives customers a chance to see and test outdoor furniture from world famous brands like Gloster from the UK, Tuuci from US, Dedon from Germany and Royal Botania from Belgium.

"Sunstyle is introducing these brands to China and selling the furniture here," Li Bai, marketing director of Sunstyle in Beijing and Shanghai, said.

The company has two showrooms in Beijing: the one at Pinnacle Avenue is its newest, opened earlier this year. Its older and larger showroom is located near the China National Film Museum. Although the Pinnacle Avenue showroom is smaller, it still features all the furniture imported by Sunstyle.

The Pinnacle Avenue showroom has an elaborate design. At its door are rattan desks and chairs, silver sand and bright flowers. The room has a high ceiling and is painted white. Various brands of furniture are there for visitors to try out. The showroom has a small cafe serving coffee and snacks. "It is a way for visitors to be around our furniture. They can sit on the chairs and have a cup of coffee to see that the chair is not only beautiful, but also comfortable," Li said.

All the furniture is made of environmentally-friendly materials, and can endure extremely high or low temperatures. They are also easy to clean. "Clean water is enough to wash away any dust and stains."

Li said her favorite is the Dedon rattan series from Germany. All Dedon furniture is hand-made in the Philippines by generations of rattan craftsmen. Dedon sends materials from Germany to the Philippines for the craftsmen. "When I look at the chairs or

desks carefully, I can see how much time and energy the workers spent making them," Li said.

But the furniture is expensive. A desk or a chair at the showroom costs at least 2,000 yuan. "These outdoor furniture brands are high-end and used by five-star hotels, rich people and celebrities. Their target customers are the same in China," Li said.

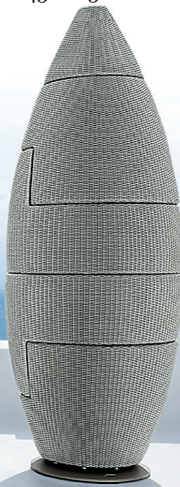
Call in advance to schedule an appointment and try out Sunstyle's outdoor furniture.

Sunstyle Outdoor Furniture

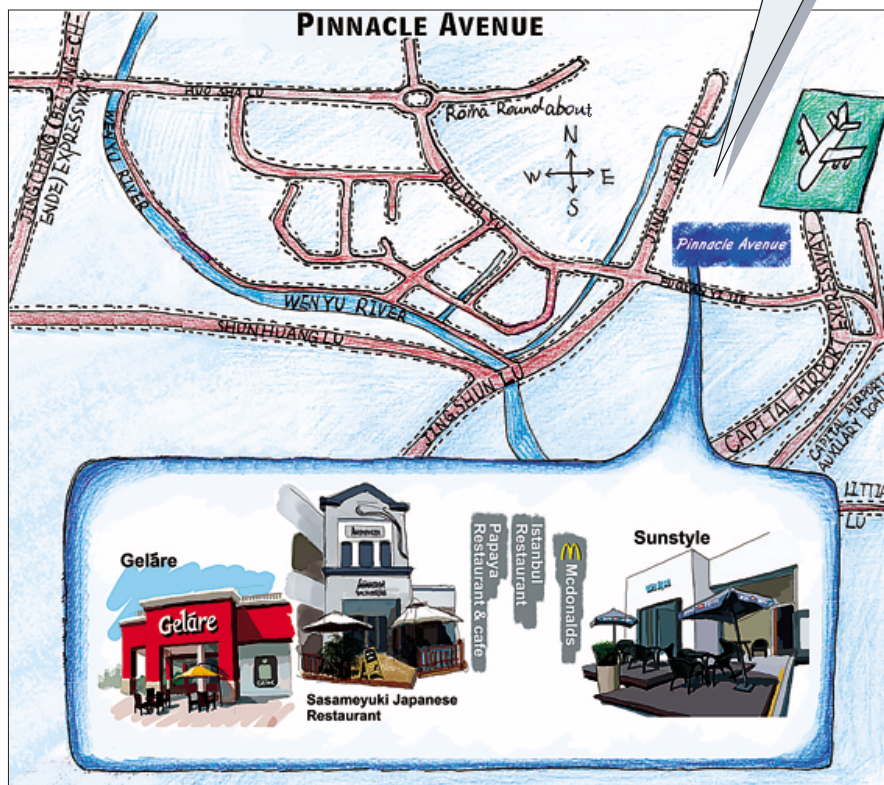
Where: 21-106 Liyuan Jie, Tianzhu Development Zone, Shunyi District

Open: 10 am – 7 pm

Tel: 6458 6850



Dedon rattan series



Illustrated by Jiao Shu

Cooler leisure space



By Venus Lee

Ice cream was invented in Italy, and Gelare is the Italian word for "freeze."

This store, located next to The British School of Beijing in Shunyi, is well on its way to becoming the coolest leisure space for children and young people. The shop features many steamy brews, cool gelato, home-made waffles and refreshing smoothies made with ingredients imported from Australia.

The Gelare Banana Split (48 yuan) is an ice cream sundae with hot fudge, chopped nuts, bananas, whipped cream, a maraschino cherry and a scoop of strawberry and butterscotch sauce. The Rocks (38 yuan), a macadamia nut ice cream topped with butterscotch, chopped nuts, crushed waffle cones, whipped cream and a maraschino cherry, is also a taste of heaven down to the

very last bite.

The waffle cones at Gelare are some of Beijing's finest. The cones are baked, rolled and drizzled with syrup and stuffed with macadamia nut ice cream (35 yuan).

The Mango Mango milkshake (28 yuan) is another treat: a thick mixture of mango sorbet, mango juice and fresh mango and vanilla bean milkshake (28 yuan).

Although Gelare may appear to be more expensive than other ice cream shops, it is not. A half-liter of ice cream at Gelare weighs more than a liter at most other ice cream shops.

Gelare

Where: 29/102 Pinnacle Avenue, Liyuan Jie, Tianzhu Development Zone, Shunyi District

Open: 9 am – 9:30 pm
Tel: 6458 4168

Photo by Venus Lee